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THE LIFE
OF
JOSEPH FREDERICK WALLET
DES BARRES

BY

JOHN CLARENCE WEBSTER

PRIVATELY PRINTED

SHEDIAC, N. B.

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INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres, when, as a collector of Canadiana, I had the opportunity of examining charts and views which were prepared by him for the great Admiralty publication of the eighteenth century, known as "The Atlantic Neptune". The immensity of this undertaking, the high standard of technical achievement displayed in its execution, and the charm of many of the aquatint views of places on the eastern coast of America, aroused my interest in the man who had spent about twenty years of his life in bringing this work to full fruition. About eight years ago I was also fortunate enough to obtain in London a number of original letters and documents, sent by DesBarres to Lord Sydney when he was in London seeking to obtain redress from the government for claims and grievances. One of these was the original "Statement" which contained most interesting autobiographical data as well as a dignified presentation of his claims. (This I have reproduced on page 58). A study of these papers induced me to undertake further investigations into DesBarres' career, and I have continued them ever since. Shortly after acquiring this material my enthusiasm was greatly stimulated through my fortunate acquaintance with Mr. Henry M. Stevens, the well-known scholarly dealer of London, to whose efforts as a collector of Americana, so many libraries and individuals on this side of the Atlantic have been indebted for some of the rarest treasures which they have acquired.

Mr. Stevens had been collecting Atlantic Neptune charts and views for twenty years, and had accumulated an immense number of plates representing various states and issues. It was my privilege to examine these with him, and to gain some knowledge of the investigations which he had been making, with such rich material at his command. Mr. Stevens planned to publish a large volume, which would be a comprehensive account of the gradual development of the work directed by DesBarres under the spon-

sorship of the Admiralty, which comprised surveys of the entire eastern coast of North America.

Mr. Stevens knew nothing about DesBarres' life or other activities, and, learning that I was engaged on a study of the man's career, he invited me to complete my work and to make it the Introductory portion of his volume. I agreed to this proposal and we separated, each to pursue his own particular line of investigation. Mr. Stevens' notes accumulated, and when he was at work on his manuscript, an unexpected find in the Admiralty, consisting of a large number of DesBarres' original drawings, impressions, proofs, letters, etc., forced him to discontinue writing in order that he might undertake an exhaustive study of this new material. When he returned to his task, ill-health overtook him and terminated his activities. His decline was progressive and he died on April 26, 1930, greatly regretted by his many friends. Had his manuscript been near completion it might have been used by a competent editor, but it would have been difficult for any one to make use of his notes so as to adequately carry out his purpose.

In 1927 I presented to the Royal Society of Canada an account of DesBarres' career up to the conclusion of his work on the Atlantic Neptune, including the period of his active service until the peace of 1763, his employment by the Admiralty in surveying the eastern coast of Canada, 1764-1774, and his engagement in London in publishing for the Admiralty the great number of plates, with accompanying texts, which were based on his own surveys and those of other men, of whom Samuel Holland was one of the most distinguished. My Royal Society paper is incorporated in this publication.

The remaining portion of DesBarres' career embraces his Governorship of Cape Breton, which island had been separated from the government of Nova Scotia in 1784, his Governorship of Prince Edward Island, and his last years of unofficial life in Nova Scotia, when his chief concern was the development and administration of the large grants of land which he held in the province. These periods I have dealt with on broad lines, emphasizing DesBarres' most outstanding characteristics and activities, and disregarding petty and trivial details, which are not necessary to an understanding of the man. His was a re-

markable personality. Possessed of great mental endowments, superabundant energy, and robust health, he was capable of intensive and long-continued efforts. Unfortunately for his peace of mind, he was often over-impetuous and intemperate in speech and action, and, thus, became involved in a series of antagonisms, which reacted with unpleasant results on himself. Thus, in 1773, he entered into a controversy with the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, and had to make an apology before the whole Council of the Province. But the two important conflicts of his career were with the British Government, one in connection with his Atlantic Neptune work, the other arising out of his Governorship of Cape Breton. His own accounts of these are rich in details and vigorous in presentation. They carry conviction to the reader, but at the time of their publication they did not seem to produce this effect on the British officials with whom he was in dispute.

Unfortunately, we cannot ascertain the real views of these officials,¹ either because they were not recorded, or because the records have disappeared. DesBarres' grievances were fully aired and fully described, and we possess all his written statements. In the case of his dispute with the Admiralty little is to be found to explain their obduracy. The presumption is that he was considered as a mere guinea-a-day employee, whose fierce importunings concerning his financial claims served only to irritate them and to harden their hearts against him. In the case of the Cape Breton controversy, Lord Sydney prepared a full report, which was laid before the British Cabinet, but unfortunately, this has disappeared. I have found only one short letter of this Minister, written to DesBarres, which, however, is sufficiently explicit to give an impression of the opinion held in official circles. Undoubtedly, DesBarres' vigorous and incessant appeals had the same effect on Ministers which his earlier bombardment of the Admiralty had produced, and caused a delay of several years before final consideration was given to the justice of his pleas, and some compensation allowed him.

In his dealings with men and official bodies, if DesBarres had exhibited more of the spirit of "*suaviter in*

¹ Though in the Public Records Office, London, there are a number of papers from the Admiralty, Treasury and Board of Trade and Plantations, relating to DesBarres' accounts, services, claims, etc.

modo" and less of "*fortiter in re*", his course through life would have been much less stormy than it actually was.

I am able, also, to reproduce in color, the only two portraits of DesBarres yet discovered, one representing him in full manhood, the other in old age. The plate which represents the Founding of Sydney, C. B., has been reproduced from a beautiful original water-colour in my possession, painted by Lieutenant Booth, who accompanied General Campbell, Commander-in-Chief, from Halifax, on a visit to Sydney in August, 1785.

EARLY LIFE

The family of Vallett des Barres (the old spelling) is a very ancient one in the county of Montbéliard in the South East of France, not far from the Swiss frontier, the village of Héricourt having been probably its place of origin, according to the late Professor Viénot of Paris, himself a native of Montbéliard.¹ This district has had an interesting history. After belonging to the Franks and Burgundians it was joined to Lorraine in 843. In the 11th Century it again reverted to Burgundy and later to the German Empire. In 1397 it passed to Württemberg, to which it belonged until 1793, when it was annexed by France of which it has formed a part ever since.

Its population became largely Protestant at the time of the Reformation and, later, in the days of religious persecution after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, they endured much suffering and many were forced to flee to other countries, especially Switzerland, Holland, Germany and England.

In 1750-53, the British Government, deciding to encourage settlement in Nova Scotia, advertised in Germany for emigrants. Several hundreds were secured in this manner, partly native Germans, partly Swiss and expatriated Protestants from the district of Montbéliard. Under guarantee of assistance and protection they went to Nova Scotia, and established a settlement on the South shore at Merliguesch Bay, which was officially named Lunenburg on May 10th, 1753.

According to Viénot, while the name DesBarres has been found as far back as the 13th century, the first of the family of whom a record exists was Jean Vallet des Barres, a Councillor of the Province of Montbéliard in 1685. He was dismissed from this position and banished to Basel in Switzerland, on account of his religious convictions; there

¹. The data obtained by Professor Vienot were given to the Rev. Thomas DesBarres, formerly of Hertford, but now of Ware, Herts., in England, to whose courtesy I am indebted for permission to use them. Mr. DesBarres owns the original pastel, a fine copy of which I have reproduced as a frontispiece.

he died in 1719 leaving six children. One of these was named Joseph Léonard, who married Anne-Catherine Cuvier, of the family of the celebrated Cuvier, who also belonged to Montbéliard. They had the following children:

1. Joseph-Frédéric Vallet des Barres, the subject of this Memoir;
2. Charles Christophe Henri;
3. Catherine Elizabeth.

The mother, Anne-Catherine, died March 12th, 1747. The father's record has not been found but in 1765 he was alive, being 83 years of age.

In nearly all sketches of Joseph F. W. DesBarres which I have read it is stated that his father Joseph Léonard was a Protestant pastor. One, however, says that he was a teacher of French and engineering, first in London and, afterwards, in Paris. Professor Viénot has found a record of several pastors of the name DesBarres in the Montbéliard district but Joseph Léonard was not one of them. Until the records of Switzerland are searched this question must remain unsettled. In various accounts of Joseph Frédéric the following are mentioned as the place of his birth,—Montbéliard, London, Paris, Switzerland. As regards the first mentioned Viénot has made a thorough search and finds no record of Joseph Léonard's marriage, nor of the birth of any of his children in that district. Only the death of his wife, Anne-Catherine is registered there, in the Parish of St. Martin. I can find no evidence whatever for the statement that the birth of Joseph-Frédéric took place either in London or Paris. The evidence which exists at present points strongly to Switzerland. His grandfather, Jean Vallet des Barres fled to that country after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and there established his home, for it is known that he died there in 1719. But the most important information on the subject is Joseph Frederick's (anglicised) own statement at the beginning of an account of his career sent to Lord Sydney in a letter, dated October 15, 1792, the original of which, in DesBarres' own handwriting is in the writer's possession.

It read as follows:—

“Lient. Gov. DesBarres, having finished the course of his studies in his native country came to England,

and having had the honor of being presented by General Michelson, General Desaguliers, and Baron Hope, the then Ambassador of the States of Holland, to the then Duke of Cumberland, *resolved to become* a British subject, and was placed under the patronage of His Royal Highness in the Royal Academy at Woolwich”.

Now as it is well established that he was educated in Basel, it must be concluded that when he referred to his native country he could only have meant Switzerland. The year of his birth is generally stated as 1722, but as he was at the time of his death in 1824 within a month of being 103 years of age, his birth must have occurred in 1721.

Two brothers of the famous Bernoulli family, Jean and Daniel, who occupied chairs in mathematics and experimental physics in the University were among his teachers. From them he derived a thorough grounding in science which was of such service to him in later years

MILITARY CAREER

After arriving in England DesBarres attended the Royal Military College at Woolwich. On finishing his course he was offered a Commission in the Artillery or the Royal Engineers. He desired immediate active service and chose to go to America in 1756, being appointed a Lieutenant in the Royal American Regiment then in process of formation. The origin of this regiment is interesting

In the year 1755 a splendid force of British regulars under General Braddock, while marching to attack Fort DuQuesne in Pennsylvania, had been ambushed and badly defeated by a combined force of French and Indians, the formation and tactics of the British being entirely unsuited to the requirements of backwood fighting.

This unfortunate experience made a great impression on the British Military authorities and it was decided to form an American regiment of four battalions of 1000 men each, who should be mainly recruited in the Colonies. It was established by an act of Parliament, which also enacted that a number of Commissions should be given to a number of foreign Protestants who had served abroad as officers or engineers. About fifty officers, or rather less

than a third of the whole number, were of Swiss, Dutch and German origin, among them being Henri Bouquet, Frederick Haldimand, James, Augustin and Jean Marc Prevost, and Samuel Holland. The new regiment was named the "Royal American Regiment of Foot", or the 62nd, but in 1756 the number was changed to the 60th.

The Earl of Loudoun, Commander-in-Chief in America, was appointed Colonel-in-Chief. The regiment was recruited mainly from settlers of German and Swiss origin in Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina; to them were added volunteers from various British regiments and others from Europe.

When DesBarres reached America, the regiment, was not at full strength, and he was assigned the duty of raising recruits in Pennsylvania and Maryland. After collecting over 300, he was ordered to form them into a corps of field artillery, which he commanded until the arrival of a battalion of Royal Artillery from England.

Under the genius of Lieut.-Col. Bouquet, commanding the 1st Battalion, the regiment reached a high state of efficiency, adopting Colonial methods of equipment, simplified drill, open formations and native methods of forest warfare, acquiring, in the words of Hutton, "those attributes of individual action, swift initiative, and of elastic thought, firm discipline, characteristics which fitted the regiment to play a most important and distinguished role in the struggle between France and England in America. A brilliant youth like DesBarres could not have found a better training ground for the development of his mind and character, nor an abler lot of associates, in all the armies of Europe.

In 1757, as the result of Indian raids in the region of Schenectady, he was sent against the savages whom he defeated and dispersed, capturing their leading chiefs. During the remainder of the year he served under Lord Howe against the French on Lake George, and in the autumn reconnoitred and made a report of the enemy's fortified position at Ticonderoga. In 1758 he went with the 2nd and 3rd battalions of his regiment to serve under General Amherst at the siege of Louisbourg. At Gabarus Bay he was one of the first to land and capture a French intrenchment. During the siege he was employed in developing the approaches and gained the approval of General Wolfe, who praised him so highly, that, in the following

year, he was chosen to accompany the General as an engineer in the Quebec campaign.

After the fall of Louisbourg, DesBarres obtained from French officers documents and plans relating to the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, and during the following winter in Halifax, he prepared a large scale chart of the river, which was of great service to the fleet in the expedition to Quebec. He states that this work gained him the general approbation, and particular friendship in many instances, of the naval commanders. James Cook, master in H.M.S. *Penbroke*, also wintered in Halifax and took lessons in mathematics, astronomy and surveying from DesBarres. He must have been aware of the work which the latter was carrying on and may have assisted him in it. Certainly the experience must have greatly helped him in preparing his own large scale chart of the St. Lawrence in 1759.

The 2nd and 3rd battalions fought at Quebec, and DesBarres was with them. Their brilliant service led Wolfe to give them the designation of "*Celer et Audax*" a motto borne ever since by the regiment (now the King's Royal Rifle Corps). DesBarres states that he was making a report to the general regarding orders which he had executed, when the latter was fatally wounded. There is no authority for the statement in various accounts that DesBarres was Wolfe's official Aide-de-camp, though he was undoubtedly in the general's favour as an Engineer and was much employed by him in this capacity.

SURVEY WORK

After the fall of Quebec, he was employed on surveys in the town and environs; he made a plan of the battle of the Plains of Abraham and took soundings of the harbour and basin. His work was incorporated in a large plan, afterwards published in the *Atlantic Neptune*. He remained in Quebec during the ensuing winter and was sent in the spring with 500 men to establish a post at Cap Rouge, nine miles up the river. Before the work was completed the approach of the French army under De Levis led to the abandonment of the position, and the troops retired to Quebec. In the battle of St. Foy which followed soon afterwards, Major Mackellar, Chief Engineer, was severely wounded and DesBarres was called upon for ex-

tra work in preparing the defences of the town, though Samuel Holland of the Royal Americans was appointed in Mackellar's place. After the relief of Quebec and the retirement of the French to Montreal, DesBarres was sent with a force to reduce Fort Jacques Cartier and other posts higher up the St. Lawrence. After the fall of Montreal he was sent to Nova Scotia with Col. Bastide to make surveys and to plan and make estimates for the fortifications and dockyard of Halifax. In 1762 he served as Engineer and Quarter Master General in the expedition sent under Col. Wm. Amherst to recapture St. John's Newfoundland, from the French. He surveyed several of the principal harbours of the island and made plans for their defence, which were sent to the Commander-in-chief in New York. He then returned to Halifax on duty as an Engineer, having been officially thanked for his services in Newfoundland.

In 1763, General Amherst, Commander-in-chief, recalled him to New York, intending to employ him in making military reports in different parts of the colonies, but as Amherst returned to England, (being succeeded by General Gage), this duty was not required. About this time Rear Admiral Spry, in command of the fleet in America, represented to the Admiralty that the coasts of Nova Scotia and the American Colonies were very imperfectly charted, and he proposed that accurate surveys should be made. Several senior officers having declined to undertake the work he recommended DesBarres to the Admiralty as being well qualified for the task. Spry was succeeded by Lord Colvill, who was instructed by the Admiralty to employ DesBarres in the survey, and obtained General Gage's permission for the necessary leave of absence from his military duties. He was sent to Halifax to make preparations, with the assurance that he would be well rewarded if the work were successfully accomplished and that promotion in rank would follow. His salary was fixed by the Admiralty at 20 shillings a day, with allowances for equipment, contingencies, etc. DesBarres threw himself energetically into the work of surveying and charting the coasts, and making many sketches and drawings for a period of ten years. He states that his efforts gained the praise of Lord Colvill and succeeding Commanders on the North American Station, Lord Hood, Admirals Gambier, Montagne and Earl Egmont of the Admiralty, his services being described as of national importance. In 1774 he went

to England and received the commendation of the King. On the advice of Earl Howe, who represented the importance of the surveys to His Majesty's ships serving in American waters, as well as to merchant vessels, the King ordered their publication. DesBarres was then instructed to undertake this work under Lord North, First Lord of the Treasury, and the Board of Trade and Plantations. It was an arduous and responsible task involving great attention to details, selecting, correcting and adopting not only the surveys which had been made by himself in America, but those which were sent to London by other workers; and in addition he had to supervise the engraving, printing and publishing of the sheets. He was engaged in this enterprise for ten years, having in 1776-1779 a staff of 20 to 23 assistants, while in other years they never numbered more than 7.

The printing of the engraved plates began in 1774 the earliest yet found by the late Mr. Henry Stevens being that of Whitehaven in Nova Sctia, dated March 20th. Editions were issued in 1777, 1780, 1781, and 1784, some being in folio, the full size of the plates, others in narrow folios, the plates being folded vertically. To these the name of Atlantic Neptune was given. Mr. I. N. Phelps Stokes¹ in his *Iconography of Manhattan Island* states that the edition of 1784 represents DesBarres' special selection of the most interesting and attractive charts and views, a number being suppressed which had been included in earlier editions. He also points out that special copies of the Atlantic Neptune were issued from time to time made up of selections from the complete set of charts and views. These were intended for the use of Masters of vessels, who required only the sheets relating to the coasts which they intended to visit. DesBarres published a partial catalogue of his 1781 edition, of which Harvard College Library has a copy. The title is as follows:—

Surveys of North America
entitled ATLANTIC NEPTUNE;
published by Command of Government,
for the use of the
Royal Navy of Great Britain

¹. Published in six volumes. New York, 1915-1928.

The publisher was W. Babbs, Bookseller and Stationer, No. 31 Oxford Street. It consists of 15 pages and contains the title and prices of the plates, a few being added in writing.

On two pages is printed the following notice:

“For the conveniency of Navigators, and the public, any Chart or View comprehended in this work may be had singly of W. Babbs, Bookseller (No. 31) Oxford Street.”

An interesting description of the final (1784) edition is found in *L'Esprit des Journaux*, Paris, 1784. III; 459-74. It has been translated by Mr. Stokes (Op. cit. Vol. 1, 349) as follows:—

There has recently been placed on sale at The Hague by P. F. Gosse, court book-seller and printer, a superb Atlas, which we take this first opportunity to describe in detail. This work, which is indispensable for the navy, is the result of nineteen years' labour and has cost the English government more than £100,000 sterling, in addition to the considerable expenses which the author himself has discharged for its execution. The work is of the highest degree of beauty and superior to everything of the kind that has heretofore been published.

It is entitled:—

Plans of the coast and harbours of North America, entitled: the Atlantic Neptune, executed, engraved and published by the order of the government for the use of the Royal Navy of Great Britain, by Joseph F. W. DesBarres, Esq., under the direction of the very honorable Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Sunt ingeniorum monumenta, quæ sæculis probantur.

This work, of the highest possible utility for navigation and commerce, is offered to the public at a price considerably below its value, and the enormous expenses of its execution, in acknowledgment of the protection and assistance which the author has received from parliament. The first part contains the original plans by the author, of the coast and the harbours of Nova Scotia with soundings, maritime remarks, etc., on LXXXIV leaves of royal paper. The second part consists of charts composed of different plans, observations and remarks of officers of the navy and army employed by the government as follows:—

The coast and the harbours of the gulf and river St. Lawrence and of the islands of Cape Breton, Saint John, etc., on XXXVI leaves of royal paper.

The charts of the harbours and the coast between New

York and the entrance of the Mississippi river on XXVI leaves of royal paper.

The price of this Atlas bound in one volume in calf is 160f., and as the work is sold for the account of the author it will be delivered only on receipt of cash. Address Pierre-Frédéric Gosse, Court book-seller and printer to S. A. S. who alone is authorized by the author to dispose of this work in foreign parts.

The same Atlas (*impression supérieure*) Large size on imperial paper with the addition of several pictures superbly printed in colours representing views of the coasts, the river banks and interior portions of the country, views of towns, remarkable places, etc., the whole accompanied by numerous interesting plans and views of military operations occurring during the war in America.

In two Volumes

The price of this work complete in CCLVIII sheets on imperial paper is 252f., money of Holland, payable in cash.

From such a full description, it may readily be admitted that the encomium of Rich, in his *Bibliotheca Americana Nova*, I 249, viz: that the Atlantic Neptune is the "most splendid collection of charts, plans and views ever published", is not exaggerated.

It is interesting now to enquire as to the actual number of the original surveys which were made by DesBarres and of those made by others. Those who have only a casual or superficial acquaintance with the Atlantic Neptune regard DesBarres as responsible for the entire work, and this view has often been stated in books. Nothing could be farther from the truth. DesBarres was engaged in surveys only during the years 1763-1774. During the next ten years he was in London, revising his charts and drawings, as well as those sent in by other officers, military and naval, who carried on work on the East coast of America; he also supervised the engraving of the plates and the printing of the letter-press which accomplished them.

Pre-eminent among these workers was Samuel Holland (or Hollandt), whose career must be briefly noted. He was born in Holland in 1728, being descended from a refugee English family who went there in 1660. As a youth he had a thorough mathematical and scientific training and entered the Dutch army when his country was invaded by the French. In 1754 he went to England and, through influence, was made a lieutenant in the Royal American

Regiment, like DesBarres, being entered as an engineer. He was a good draughtsman, with mathematical ability, trained in military engineering, master of several languages, and with several years' active service to his credit. He had a pleasant manner and possessed much tact, finding much favour at the hands of Lord Loudoun, Commander-in-Chief. In 1757 he was made a Captain-Lieutenant and was employed in making plans of the province of New York; he also reconnoitred and made drawings of the French works at Ticonderoga (I have already stated that DesBarres was also employed in the latter task). Holland accompanied the Royal Americans to Louisbourg in 1758, serving as an engineer, making surveys, preparing plans and taking soundings. He stood high in Wolfe's favour (DesBarres also claimed this distinction) and took an important part under Wolfe in the final attack on the fortifications. After the capitulation he made a survey of the fortifications, the town and environs, which is of the greatest value to the historian for it gives in detail the position of the British encampments, batteries and trenches as well as the French fortifications and defences. James Cook helped Holland in this survey and Captain Simcoe of *H. M.S. Pembroke* became so interested in the work that he engaged Holland and Cook to make a chart of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, in preparation for the expedition against Quebec which he knew must soon be undertaken. Simcoe and Wolfe favoured an immediate advance but they were overruled.

Later in the year Holland was on duty in Halifax and when the *Pembroke* was in the harbour he spent his spare hours working on board with Captain Simcoe and Cook. In a letter written by Holland to Lieut.-Gov. Simcoe in 1792, referring to this period he says:—

“Under Capt. Simcoe's eye, Mr. Cook and myself compiled materials for a chart of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, which plan at his decease was dedicated to Sir Charles Saunders; with no other alteration than what Mr. Cook and I made coming up the River. Another chart of the River, including Chaleur and Gaspé Bays, mostly taken from plans in Admiral Durell's possession, were compiled and drawn under your father's (i.e. Capt. Simcoe's) inspection and sent by him for immediate publication to Mr. Thos. Jeffrey. These charts were of much use, as some copies came out prior to our sailing from Halifax for Quebec in 1759. By the drawing of these plans under so able an in-

structor, Mr. Cook could not fail to improve, and thoroughly brought in his hand as well in drawing as protracting, etc., and by your father's finding the latitudes and longitudes along the coast of America, principally Newfoundland and Gulf of St. Lawrence, so erroneously heretofore laid down, he was convinced of the propriety of making accurate surveys of these parts. In consequence, he told Capt. Cook that, as he had mentioned to several of his friends in power, the necessity of having surveys of these parts and astronomical observations made as soon as peace was restored, he would recommend him to make himself competent to the business by learning Spherical Trigonometry, with the practical part of Astronomy, at the same time giving him Leadbitter's works, a great authority on astronomy, etc., of which Mr. Cook, assisted by his explanations of difficult passages, made infinite use, and fulfilled the expectations entertained of him by your father, in his survey of Newfoundland".

It is thus evident that Cook's education was mainly due to Holland and Capt. Simcoe, yet, as has been stated, DesBarres has been credited with having been his chief instructor during the months following the capture of Louisbourg. Probably this relationship developed during the winter of 1759, though Holland was absent from Halifax for some months, engaged in restoring the fort at the mouth of the Saint John river.

It is interesting also to note that Holland, like DesBarres, claims much credit for the charts which were used by Admiral Saunders' fleet in the passage up the St. Lawrence in the spring of 1759. After Holland's service in the siege and capture of Quebec he was employed as an Engineer, (as was DesBarres) in strengthening the defences. In 1760 after Mackellar, Chief Engineer, was wounded at St. Foy, Holland was appointed Acting Chief, and DesBarres must have served under his orders at this time. In 1761 Gen. Murray employed Holland in making surveys in Quebec Province. In 1762 he was sent to England with his plans where he remained until 1764, having the rank of Captain. In March of this year he was appointed Surveyor-General of the Province of Quebec with a salary, and Surveyor-General of the Northern District, without additional salary, and he reported for duty in Quebec in August. The Northern District, assigned to him, comprised all that part of the continent north of the Potomac river as far West as His Majesty's dominions extended. Under the instructions of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, he then prepared for a survey of Isle St. Jean

(Prince Edward), the Magdalenes and Cape Breton, owing to their importance as fishing areas. In his commission by order of the King "All Governors, Lieutenant-Governors, Commanders-in-Chief and other officers and ministers, whatsoever, within our Dominions, are to take notice thereof, and to be aiding and assisting, etc., unto the said Samuel Holland, his Deputy or Deputies, in the due execution of the said survey in all things as becometh".

Holland began his work in Isle St. Jean in October. Very early he came into conflict with the Royal Navy, for applying to Lieutenant Mowatt, who commanded the vessel which had conveyed him to the Island, for boats with seaman to assist him in taking soundings and surveying, he was met with a refusal, the Lieutenant stating that his ship would convey Holland wherever he desired to go, but that the Admiralty had ordered him to make observations and surveys himself, and that he could furnish neither men nor boats. This situation indicates that there was some conflict between the Admiralty and the Board of Trade and Plantations, the former evidently resenting the invasion of their prerogatives. This must be remembered in considering the relations of Holland and DesBarres, for the former worked under one authority and the latter under the other. Holland overcame his difficulties and by October 1765 had made such progress that he was able to send to London the surveys both of Isle St. Jean and the Magdalenes. He next surveyed Cape Breton and sent his plans to London in July 1767. During the following years he was engaged on the River St. Lawrence and the west coast of the Gulf. On July 6th, 1770, he was ordered to go to the easterly parts of New England *to continue the survey* commenced by DesBarres; this included Maine and New Hampshire. His work continued down the coast and in 1774 his surveys extended around Cape Cod to New London. He was also employed in correcting the boundary between New York and New Jersey. In 1775, while running the line between New York and Massachusetts, his work ceased owing to the outbreak of war.

It is thus very evident that a large proportion of original surveys which appeared in the Atlantic Neptune were made by Holland. His range of operations was probably somewhat as follows:—on the Mainland, from the town of Quebec, down the river St. Lawrence, and along the



J. F. W. DES BARRES

IN MIDDLE AGE. FROM A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL PASTEL
IN THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

West shore of the Gulf to the Strait of Canso; also the islands of St. Jean, Cape Breton and the Magdalenes.

DesBarres surveyed Sable Island, and the Coast of Nova Scotia from the Strait of Canso around the Bay of Fundy as far as the Saint John river on the south coast of New Brunswick.

From the Saint John river to Passamaquoddy Bay the survey was conducted by Wright and Hurd, acting under Holland. (Hurd, in later years became Capt. Thomas Hurd, R. N., appointed Hydrographer to the Admiralty in 1808).

The rest of the coast, at least as far as New York, was surveyed by Holland.

DesBarres published in London, in 1778, an account of his work in Nova Scotia under the following title:—

“Nautical remarks and observations on the coasts and harbours of Nova Scotia, surveyed pursuant to orders from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for the use of the Royal Navy.”

This accompanied his charts and drawings in the Atlantic Neptune.

An interesting feature of DesBarres' work on the coasts of Nova Scotia is his nomenclature. He discarded local and native names to a very large extent and substituted others which commemorated well-known English families or persons prominent in public life. Most of the latter names were not adopted and were discarded in later surveys.

The charts of the coast between New York and the Mississippi were made by various Surveyors, Engineers and Naval Officers, and in DesBarres' own words, were composed and published, under the orders of Government by himself. (Babbs).

In December 1775 Holland arrived in England with his notes and plans and was immediately employed by Lord George Germain in making maps. We know nothing of his relations with DesBarres, who had just started his work in London, after having completed his surveys in Nova Scotia. The probability is that there was no collaboration between them, Holland returning to America on military duty early in 1776.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary war, the Royal Navy was not provided with exact charts of the American

Coast, and there was an urgent demand from Lord Howe and other naval officers for the immediate publication of the surveys which had been sent to London. It was this necessity which caused the plans of Holland and others, made under the supervision of the Board of Trade and Plantations, to be turned over to DesBarres, who was working under the Admiralty. In considering his work of arranging, correcting and supervising the preparation of the plans which afterward appeared in the *Atlantic Neptune* the question arises as to whether DesBarres was scrupulously careful to give due credit to Holland and the other officers who had carried out such a laborious enterprise as making surveys of the greater part of the East coast of North America. Certainly, he has referred to their services in a general way in his catalogues of the plates and has mentioned Holland and a few others by name, but many names are omitted. Moreover, there are many plates and charts on which imprints appear as follows:—"Published according to Act of Parliament" or "Published as the Act directs by J. F. W. DesBarres," which could not possibly have been originally made by DesBarres. Yet, the entire credit is generally given to him for these plates and charts by those who are ignorant as to the methods by which they were produced.

The originals, of course, were the property of the government and could be disposed of according to their wishes. But if DesBarres took the drawings of others and worked them up for the engraver, he is surely not entitled to all the credit for them. Yet the Admiralty seems to have been satisfied to allow his name only to appear on a large number of plates, omitting all reference on them even to themselves. In this connection reference may again be made to the 1784 edition sold in Amsterdam to foreigners. While the title states that the *Atlantic Neptune* was executed by DesBarres, under the direction of the Admiralty and while the prospectus mentions the cost as being over £100,000, it distinctly states that the work is sold for the account of the author. This seems a curious arrangement for a government to make, yet it will be shown later, this privilege was allowed DesBarres when the work was undertaken, though no mention of his receipts was ever made in the many statements which he presented to the government.

DesBarres' salary had been fixed at £1 a day, and this was paid by the Board of Trade and Plantations, through

whom estimates for the expense of production were presented to Parliament each year. But, when this Board was suppressed in 1780, DesBarres received no further salary and the Admiralty refused to pay him, though he kept up his work until 1784. Then, finding himself in financial difficulties he determined to appeal to the government. After many representations he laid a Memorial before His Majesty. In it he referred to the sums due him for contingent outlays in his surveys from 1763-1774, to the failure to continue his early salary for his work in London, and to other expenses. He further referred to the reduction of his resources through ravaging of his property in Minudie, Nova Scotia, by American raiders. He included other grievances relating to his military status, instancing the failure of the Government to grant him promotion in rank, several junior officers in his regiment (Royal American) having been raised above him, and one, who had served below him in the same battalion having been raised to a Lieut.-Coloneley. (DesBarres was given the rank of Major only on March 19th, 1783).

The King referred the statement to a committee of the Privy Council, and they, having consulted the Admiralty, advised that the sum of £3915.17.8 be paid to him for contingencies incurred on the survey of coasts and harbours, carried on under their own direction, but with respect to the subsequent expense incurred in the course of adopting the Nautical use of the surveys of others, as the same had been undertaken in pursuance of His Majesty's Royal Order to the Treasury, their Lordships were of opinion that the consideration thereof did not belong to their Department.

“Thereupon, the Lords of the Committee, in their report to His Majesty after stating the sum proposed by the said Lord Commissioners to be allowed, were pleased to express themselves in the following words *viz*:—

“It only remains for this Committee to state to your Majesty and humbly submit to your Majesty's gracious consideration the recommendation in favour of the Memorialist contained in the Report of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty upon that part of the Memorialist's case, which relates to compensation for his losses and reward for his services, *viz*: with respect to the losses, which the Memorialist may have sustained in rank and emolument in his profession of a soldier, and in his private fortune by devoting so many years of his life to the execution of an arduous and difficult work, which must be productive of great bene-

fit and utility not only to you Majesty's service, but to the public in general. We are not competent to form a judgment of the nature of these losses sufficient for us to estimate the amount thereof, or to propose an equivalent compensation; but we are nevertheless of opinion, that the Memorialist may be deserving of some mark of your Majesty's favour as a further reward for the zeal, activity and ability, in prosecuting and completing the above mentioned useful work; if what is stated by the Memorialist is well founded, viz: that, for works of a similar nature which, he humbly presumes, do not exceed those carried on under his directions, either in hazard, difficulty, time or expense, sums of money have been allowed to the surveyors far beyond any claim made to the Board of Admiralty by the Memorialist".

DesBarres pointed out that the comparison made in their Lordships' recommendation was eminently in his favour and he drew up a comparative statement showing how much more favourably Samuel Holland and his associate Debrahm had been treated in connection with their surveys in America. Moreover, in order to strengthen his case he disparaged their work as being much less arduous than his own. His words are:—

"In their case, they and their assistants had their choice, in stations and weather, without interruption or risk to their persons or apparatus, whereas, in exploring among rocks and shoals, the channels and safe pilotage into the numerous excellent harbours, discovered by DesBarres, as well as in ascertaining the soundings and navigation of the coast until then unexplored, he had to anticipate and provide for many eventful exigencies under a constant variety of circumstances—the greater the danger, the greater was the necessity of ascertaining it with accuracy and precision. He had frequently been wrecked with the loss of his necessaries and instruments, and has suffered great personal hardships: and, his task being far more complicated and extensive, he necessarily employed all along and supported, a greater number of Assistants".

This comparison seems exaggerated and somewhat unfair. The conditions under which Holland worked in the Gulf of St. Lawrence at any rate could not have been very different from those with which DesBarres contended, though the dangers of Sable Island which the latter surveyed were probably greater than elsewhere. It was also pointed out that when Holland and Debrahm returned to England to prepare their surveys for publication adequate sums were, as before, granted by Parliament. However, the plan to publish their work was not carried out by them, with the exception of their land surveys. Those re-

lating to nautical use were turned over to DesBarres, who prepared them for the Atlantic Neptune.

DesBarres was given £3915.17.8, recommended by the Admiralty on November 28th, 1783, but this did not satisfy him, for, as he states, "its slender amount did not even defray the mere interest accrued on the advances which he had absolutely incurred for enabling himself to carry on the Services committed to him with due efficacy."

He continued to importune the government who apparently felt driven to do something for him. In 1784, after it had been decided to establish a separate government in Cape Breton, he was offered and accepted the Lieutenant Governorship on June 24th.

The following is DesBarres' final claim for financial reimbursement (without interest charges) which he presented when he made his last effort to obtain payment, in 1795:—¹.

For contingencies incurred, from 1763 to 1773, in carrying on surveys of the coast and Harbours in America, For Implements, Surveying and Astronomical Instruments, maintenance of Assistants, Pilots and Guides; Observatory Drawing Offices and Fuel; repairs of craft and replacing Ship-stores and Provisions lost by Wrecks and Boats oversetting in Operations of the Surveys and Soundings;.....	£	s	d
etc.	4382	3	2
For Ditto, from 1774 to 1783, in Preparation for, and Publication of the Atlantic Neptune, viz: for Implements, Assistants and Draughtsmen; House Rent and Fuel, etc.....	5475	0	0
For Expense, to engrave 257 Plates of Charts and Views, (contained in the Atlantic Neptune) at 35 Guineas, according to the allowance made by the Government.....	9444	15	0
For Ditto to prepare Impressions for the Public Service	1771	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£21072	18	2

¹. Full details may be found in the rare volume published in London, undated, but known to have been in 1795. The Title is as follows:—

A STATEMENT submitted by Lieutenant Colonel DesBarres for consideration. Respecting his services, from the year 1755 to the present time in the capacity of an Officer and Engineer during the War of 1756.—The Utility of his Surveys and Publications of the Coasts and Harbours of North America, intituled, The Atlantic Neptune.—and his proceedings and conduct as Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Colony of Great Breton.

Received—

By grants of Parliament in part of Ex-
pense incurred for engraving the above

Plates, viz:—In 1775.....	£3409	3	2
1777.....	1473	11	6
1778.....	1227	9	0
1779.....	1022	5	0
1780.....	1056	10	0

By His Majesty's Royal Order in Privy
Council, dated 28th Nov. 1783, viz: £3915-17-8,
besides £166-5-6 previously received 4082 3 2 12271 1 10

Balance (exclusive of loss sustained
in the advance of the foregoing
sums of money, also Arrears of
Salary up to the 24th June 1784,
the period of appointment to the
Government of Cape Breton)..... £8801 16 4

Details of his claims for yearly expenditures were given
as follows:—

I

For his actual survey work—

1763	Disbursed for Implements, instruments, etc.	132	10	0
1764	Began Surveys of coasts and Harbours.....	331	12	6
1765	Continued ditto	423	13	2
1766	.....	410	5	0
1767	.....	642	9	2
1768	.....	384	8	0
1769	.....	447	4	8
1770	.....	431	16	5
1771	.....	398	10	4
1772	.....	364	3	1
1773	.....		

Ten years surveys of coasts and harbours £4382 3 2

II

For preparing and publishing the Atlantic Neptune—

1774	.....	458	10	0
1775	.....	483	5	6
1776	.....	960	0	0
1777	.....	853	0	0
1778	.....	779	4	6
1779	.....	666	0	0
1780	.....	343	5	0
1781	.....	313	5	0
1782	.....	308	10	0
1783	.....	310	0	0

Ten years preparing and publishing the
Atlantic Neptune£5475 0 0

These totals are included in the above reimbursement
claim.

DesBarres never recovered the balance of £8801.16.4 which he claimed the British Government owed him.

In 1801 the Government ordered another investigation of DesBarres' claims, which was undertaken by Mr. T. Steele. A brief résumé of his report to the Duke of Portland is as follows:—

He found that DesBarres in 1769 presented a bill for £623, which the Admiralty reduced to £132 for purchase of instruments, his yearly allowance for instruments and stationery being fixed at ten guineas. In 1770 he asked for a larger allowance but was refused. In 1779, five years after his return to England, he presented a bill for unauthorized contingent expenses which was rejected. In 1781 he memorialized the King asking for £4214, and the Admiralty recommended payment of only £1200. In 1782, a new Board paid all DesBarres' claim except £300.

When DesBarres undertook the publication of the Atlantic Neptune in 1774, the Admiralty agreed that it should be at his own expense and profit, but, later they agreed to allow him 35 guineas for each plate. In all he was paid for 247 plates. His allowance of 20 shillings a day was paid from 1763 to 1779; it was claimed that the work was finished in 1780. In addition he received the same from the Board of Trade for three years.

The Admiralty paid for the copies of the Atlantic Neptune which they received. DesBarres kept possession of the plates.

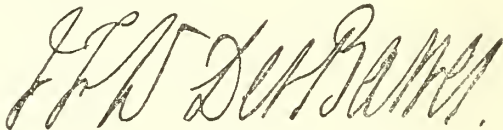
The conclusion of the report was that DesBarres had no claim whatever against the Government for his Atlantic Neptune work.

This finding is certainly at variance with DesBarres' statements and accounts, and it is rather remarkable that it had not been established by the officials during the many years of controversy which had passed. In reviewing the entire case, it must be concluded that, while DesBarres was in some respects unfairly treated, he probably exaggerated his losses, and was determined to get as much money out of the Government as possible. It is certainly remarkable that his statements included no amounts received from sales of the Atlantic Neptune, yet this perquisite had been allowed him by the Admiralty, and it must have amounted to a considerable sum. Apparently this was regarded by him as something which was personal and not to be included in any statement of debits and

credits presented to the Government. It is not easy to understand this point of view considering that he was working in the public service. The Government might have justly considered that sums received for sales should be counted on the credit side. Yet, apparently, this issue had never been raised.

DesBarres had a just grievance when he blamed the Admiralty for refusing to acknowledge responsibility for his work in supervising the selection, preparation, engraving and printing of plates made from the surveys of others, claiming that they had only to do with his own surveys from 1764 to 1774.

It is very true that many of these other surveys, *e.g.*, Holland's had not been produced under the auspices of the Admiralty, but under the Board of Trade and Plantations, yet the former were willing to benefit by these surveys and wished to have them incorporated in the Atlantic Neptune which was primarily meant to benefit the Royal Navy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. B. DesBarres'. The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being prominent.

Signature of DesBarres

It was unfortunate for DesBarres that the Board of Trade and Plantations went out of existence in 1780. Had it continued it would have been logical to turn to that body, when the Admiralty refused his claim. There was no other authority from whom he could seek assistance, and, thus he was left unsatisfied and resentful, cherishing a bitter grievance, and, undoubtedly, expressing his feelings with a caustic tongue to all who would listen to him. He must have made himself obnoxious to many officials in Whitehall. The stoppage of his salary of £1. a day after 1780 is inexplicable except on the ground that some one in authority over DesBarres was determined to punish him. Yet for four years the salary was not paid, though DesBarres continued to carry on work for the Government. Even promotion in military rank was bestowed in a niggardly spirit. When he undertook his great work in 1763 he was a Lieutenant, and only obtained a Captaincy in 1775. He was made a Major in 1783, a Lieut.-Colonel in 1794 and a full Colonel in 1798. His name was retained in the Army list until his death in 1824.

ESTIMATE OF THE ATLANTIC NEPTUNE

The work must be regarded as one of the most remarkable products of human industry which has been given to the world through the arts of printing and engraving. This might be regarded as an exaggeration by one who has seen only a narrow folio edition, with folded plates, or even the large folio with full-size plates. But when Mr. Stevens' collection is examined with its enormous number of the various states in which the plates, both of views and charts, were produced, one is filled with amazement at the magnitude of the work which DesBarres directed.

Apart from the practical value of the Atlantic Neptune, the artistic excellence of the views alone would give it high rank. This feature is solely due to DesBarres. He drew with great sensitiveness and had an exquisite sense of color. Many of his aquatints, whether in monotone or color, are of the highest quality.

We may wonder why so many views, both large and small, were made and the criticism that many of them had little practical value is just. But, this may be forgotten, when we consider their aesthetic value, and we should be thankful that the first important efforts in cartography on the coasts of Canada and the United States should have been presented to the world with such delightful artistic accompaniments.

The practical value of the Atlantic Neptune was soon demonstrated. It became the standard guide for ships of all nations in American waters. Yet the charts were in many instances defective, especially in regard to soundings. This is not surprising considering the extent of area covered. These defects gradually became known during the nineteenth century and fresh surveys had to be made by trained officers with competent staffs, with more means and a better equipment and organization than DesBarres, Holland and other pioneers of the eighteenth century enjoyed. The charts of the East coast of North America at the present day bear little resemblance to those of the Atlantic Neptune, nor can the influence of the latter be traced

in them¹. Yet while modern investigation has led to their displacement, this should not be with disparagement. Though we have relegated the volumes of the Atlantic Neptune to Museums and Libraries as mere curiosities, let us not forget the circumstances in which they were produced, the hardihood of those who made the original surveys, and the devotion, persistence and idealism of DesBarres, through whose efforts the Monumental work was prepared for publication.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORSHIP OF CAPE BRETON

It is interesting to speculate as to the motives which inspired the British Government when they offered the Lieutenant-Governorship of Cape Breton to DesBarres. Were they influenced by a minister whose conscience troubled him over the justice of DesBarres' complaint as to harsh and unfair treatment? Were they merely tired of his constant importunings and took this opportunity of getting rid of him, so that he would cease to annoy them, or was he chosen because of his knowledge of the Island and of his ability and fitness to administer it? It would appear as if some malignant imp of destiny had influenced them in bestowing this honour, for as the sequel will show, while it offered a certain degree of titular distinction, it brought neither glory nor happiness, but only bitterness,

¹. DesBarres' charts were standard until later surveys were made in the 19th century. In 1828 Captain Henry W. Bayfield, R.N. began, his accurate surveys of the coast of the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence; they extended as far south as Cape Breton. In 1856, his promotion to the rank of Rear Admiral necessitated his relinquishment of this work. Writing on November 17, 1848 to the Hydrographer, Admiral Beaufort, Bayfield thus refers to DesBarres' charts:

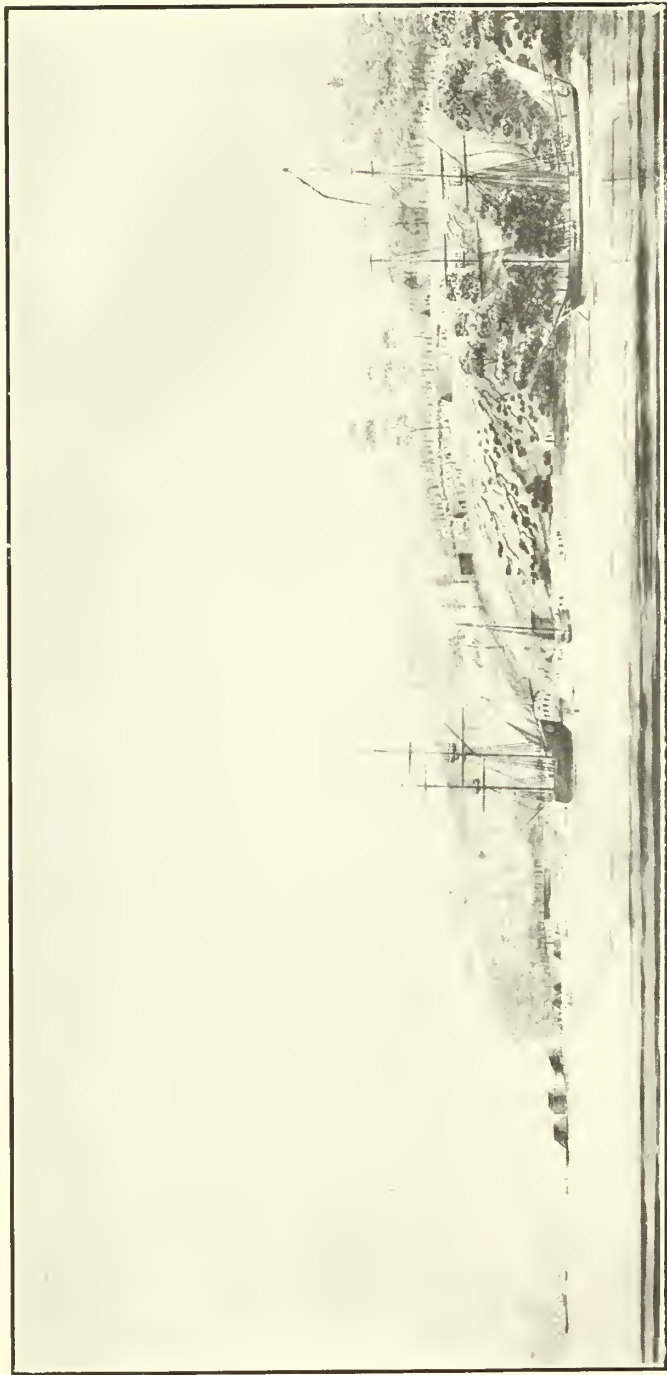
"I beg leave also to suggest to you the discontinuance of the chart of the Island of Cape Breton, or any other of DesBarres' charts, for they might possibly cause the loss of one of Her Majesty's ships, supposing her to run for shelter, either to Ste. Anne's Harbour or the Great Bras d'Or, the former being represented to have ten fathoms in the entrance, where there are only thirteen feet of water; and the other, deep water in the place of the most dangerous shoals."

In the forties Owen surveyed the south shore of New Brunswick from Saint John to Passamaquoddy Bay. In the fifties Shortland charted the Head of the Bay of Fundy and the coast of Nova Scotia as far as Cape Breton, and published a book on his methods. He abandoned all of DesBarres' names, and used local designations. Holland's exotic names in Prince Edward Island have mostly been retained.

disappointment, failure, disaster, and even disgrace. However, DesBarres had no forebodings; he was proud of his new honour, and looked forward to his governorship with the keenest enthusiasm. Having complained so long because of his slow advance in army rank he was now suddenly made a ruler of men, a representative of the King. He believed that a great opportunity lay before him as an Empire-builder. He had visions of making Cape Breton a prosperous and important outpost of British power, dominating the North Atlantic. He well knew its great potentialities, and foresaw that, with a hardy population, its great wealth in coal, forests and fisheries might be utilized to make the Island the most flourishing part of Canada. Poor visionary! How little he knew the Mother Country! Its policy towards the American Colonies had never been inspired by any such ambitions. They had everywhere frowned on Colonial development. The forests were long considered as fit only for providing masts for vessels of the navy, and when they came to be regarded as a source of lumber, the colonials were asked merely to cut down and square the trees so that they might be shipped across the ocean to be sawn in English mills. It was long afterwards before any further development of the lumber industry took place in Canada. Even for long years colonials were forbidden to develop their own water-powers, on any large scale. In Cape Breton the mining of coal had been prohibited by the British government, though it was abundant, easily worked, and the only sea-board source of supply on the entire east coast of America; British coal producers were determined that there should be no colonial competition. There was no objection to the development of fisheries, but this was mainly due to a desire to provide a supply of fishermen, who might in time of war be used as sailors in the Royal Navy; there was no real interest in the economic benefits which might accrue to the colony from expansion of this industry. Enthusiasts and visionaries like DesBarres were not in favor with British Governments of that day, particularly when their activities were manifested in the Colonies, for they saw only risk to themselves, regarding them as involving a possible threat to their entrenched economic prerogatives, their tyrannical powers, their selfish privileges and monopolies.

In 1784 Cape Breton was separated from the govern-

ment of Nova Scotia, largely due to the influence of Thomas Townshend, Lord Sydney. No explanation of this act has ever been given, but it is reasonable to suppose that owing to difficulties of communication the administration of a large straggling province, which embraced all the territory east of Quebec, was impracticable. The rapid influx of Loyalists at the close of the Revolutionary war had led to such discontent with the central administration at Halifax, that the British Government had quickly resolved to separate the territory north of the Bay of Fundy from the peninsula of Nova Scotia and to form a new Province of New Brunswick. Applications were pouring in from all parts to open Cape Breton to settlement, and the authorities, doubtless foreseeing troubles like those which had occurred in New Brunswick, decided to establish the Island as a separate government. DesBarres was appointed on June 24, 1784, and had the honour of kissing His Majesty's hand in July. In addition to being Lieut.-Governor he was invested with the command of the troops and Garrisons which might be placed both in Cape Breton and the Island of St. John (now Prince Edward), though the Secretary of State suggested that, out of consideration for the Commander-in-Chief at Halifax whose term would shortly expire, he might consent to forego his military command until the latter had departed. To this DesBarres agreed. The following officials were appointed to accompany the governor,—Town Adjutant, Barrack Master, Commissioner of Stores and Provisions, Chaplain, Surgeon physical, Commissioner of Musters. Parliament voted £1750 for depaying the charges of the Civil Establishment. Before his departure from England a Mr. Cuyler, purporting to be an agent for an association of Loyalists in Canada asked permission of the Crown to settle more than six hundred families in Cape Breton. This prospect of immediately obtaining such a large number of settlers led DesBarres to hasten his preparations for departure. He sailed from Falmouth on October 16th, 1784, touched at Halifax on November 14th, and landed in Cape Breton in December. He was greatly surprised to find that only a small percentage of Cuyler's people had arrived, and a letter from Sir Frederick Haldimand, Governor of Canada stated that no others could be expected from that source as Cuyler's representations to the Government had been unwarranted. However, a number of immigrants had ar-



FOUNDING OF SYDNEY, CAPE BRETON

Reproduction of an original water-color, by Lieutenant Booth, who accompanied General Campbell, Commander-in-Chief, from Halifax, from a visit to Sydney, in August, 1785. The tents of the 33rd regiment are on the heights. Cutting of trees is in progress. The Governor's house is seen immediately above the vessel on the right.

rived from other places and all had to be cared for during the remainder of the winter. In addition to these there was an older British and French population of about 500 souls. The newcomers settled for the winter at Louisbourg, which was mostly a mass of ruins with less than a dozen houses fit for habitation. The troops were forced to camp out, while the Governor and staff and the settlers found shelter in ruined houses and improvised shanties. All classes experienced much discomfort during the bitter weeks which followed their arrival. DesBarres wisely decided that Louisbourg was unfitted to be a capital and decided to select a new site on Spanish river about twenty-four miles north. This had the advantage of possessing a splendid harbour, whose only disadvantage was that it froze at times in winter. In April 1785 there was an exodus from Louisbourg, and that unfortunate place, once so important, was now left completely desolate, and in a short time its wastes were tenanted only by a few struggling fisher folk.

Under the direction of DesBarres the new town, named by him Sydney in honour of the Secretary for the Colonies, was founded. The site was first cleared of trees, and streets were laid out at right angles. Temporary shanties were erected, while the troops (33rd Regt.) lived in tents. Later, modest houses were built for the people, barracks for the soldiers, and quarters for the officers. Administration buildings, store-houses, blacksmiths' and carpenters' workshops; church, school-house, gaol, hospital, court-house, and public hall soon followed.

In addition to the development of Sydney, the Governor had to attend to the welfare of settlers in other parts of the Island. He tried to encourage agriculture and industry everywhere. He erected the first saw-mill and established a farm at Point Edward, his reasons being thus stated by himself:—

"I am extremely fond of agricultural improvements and experiments—and though I knew that the improvements of land in the new colonies is generally expensive and the result in advantages necessarily distant, yet I was satisfied to seek in showing examples, and adding to the general convenience and plenty as much as I might otherwise be reconciled to expend on more trivial amusements, particularly as the substance thereof would remain to the benefit of my family."

He had to supervise the opening of settlements. decide on the allotments of land, and direct the operations of surveyors, chainmen, axemen and laborers engaged in all kinds of Government work. He opened coal mines on Spanish River, working them on Government account. He encouraged the development of the fishing industry, and of trade in furs with the Indians, with the result that there was a rapid increase in the export of these commodities. One of his troubles was with currency. The specie which had been brought from England soon became exhausted and there was very little money¹ in the Island. Additional cash was obtained from visiting traders, in exchange for his own bills of exchange. Indeed, DesBarres went so far as to mortgage his estates, including the plates and impressions of the Atlantic Neptune to secure payment to the holders of all outstanding bills drawn by him for the welfare of the colony. He came into conflict with the naval authorities the summer following his arrival by commissioning an armed brig under Lieutenant Graham and ordering a pennant hoisted. She was sent to Halifax with a load of coal and was promptly seized by order of Commander Sawyer, Senior officer on the station, who notified DesBarres that he would not permit any other person to commission vessels and appoint commanders in the waters under his jurisdiction.

But his greatest troubles came when there was a large influx of new settlers. About eight hundred arrived in early summer, and later in the year more than three thousand flocked there as a result of the proclamations

“The Circulating Cash which did appear to be sufficient for every purpose of this Infant Government has been most industriously picked up the various adventurers from Halifax, and carried away with a view to distress us, and although your Excellency ever watchful for the benefit of His Majesty’s Subjects did through your wisdom order an Issue of sundry Promissory Notes as a temporary Medium of Trade to supply the want of specie (which passed current until the arrival of more adventurers from Halifax) yet through the Art and malice of the Enemies of your Government (always ready to counteract your good Intentions) the circulation of the said Notes are nearly at an end and we through that means must be left without a

¹. The following extract from a document presented to the Governor by John Williamson and others throws light on the currency difficulties (Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Vol. 332, Document No. 1):—

currency which could not at present be furnished in any other way or manner—add to our misfortune the people at Halifax depreciate your Excellency's Bills of exchange drawn on His Majesty's Treasury for carrying on the public service in building barracks for soldiers, officers quarters, stores for provisions, in cutting of Roads, surveying locating and apportioning, of lands and various other necessary and pressing useful works which objects are obvious."

which had been widely distributed by DesBarres, describing the attractions of the Island, and offering provisions and clothing for three years, lumber and building materials, tools and implements for clearing land. While the majority of the settlers were honest and industrious, some were mere adventurers and speculators, and others thriftless, lazy and disinclined to work. All fared equally as regards the Government bounties, and DesBarres was inclined to deal these out with a generous hand. By the end of 1785 he found himself in difficulties, there being an insufficient supply of provisions for the supply of the inhabitants during the winter. He applied to the Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia (John Parr) for supplies, and was refused. DesBarres in reporting this to London says that this was because Parr "had an aversion to the measure of erecting Cape Breton, formerly included within the jurisdiction of his province, into a separate government, and, together with some of the officers of his civil establishment and mercantile men long used to a monopoly of trade in Nova Scotia, seemed hurt by its dismemberment, expecting, that their perquisites and exclusive profits would be reduced. Accordingly, in order to frustrate the measure, they depreciated the natural advantages of the island, discouraged the accession of settlers, intercepted the supplies for its support, and predicted that the infant colony would be broken up the first winter". There is little doubt that the government of Nova Scotia and the leading merchants were greatly displeased at the establishment of Cape Breton as an independent colony, and they might well be expected to rejoice at DesBarres' embarrassments, which they would not help to ameliorate.

The opinion of the people of Cape Breton concerning the attitude of Nova Scotia towards the Island is expressed in a petition of Traders and Inhabitants to the Governor against the opposition of the Military and Government of

Nova Scotia, on December 8, 1785 (Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Vol. 332, Document 1):—

“We are sincerely sorry to observe that our Brethren in a Neighbouring Government appear to us to be actuated by uncommon selfish and wrong Motives. We have reason to suppose they arise from the Idea of this fine Island rising into great national consequence from the envied Situation and inexhaustible Sources of its great Fishery and internal Staples.”

That the people appreciated the efforts of the Governor on their behalf is evident from this and other documents now in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Thus in (Vol. 332, Document 2), we read a communication presented by various inhabitants to the Governor.

“We beg leave with the most heartfelt satisfaction to express to you our sincere Gratitude, Veneration and Esteem for your Paternal Care shown towards us on many and repeated occasions.....We wish to assure your Excellency that while we breathe we shall ever esteem ourselves very highly indebted to your zeal in forming and establishing a Respectable Civil Administration in this Island fixed on so firm a Basis as will undoubtedly ascertain to us and our Posterity the full advantage of the many Blessings we have already received.”

DesBarres returned his thanks for these expressions of approval and referred to:—

“Difficulties and Perturbations of the Public Tranquility seditiously stirred up by selfish and turbulent men at the instigation of an envious neighbourhood”. (Vol 332, Doc. 3, March 3, 1786).

In September, Captain Venture, in the Government brigantine, *St. Peter*, was sent to Rhode Island with a credit of £800 with which to buy supplies. On calling at Halifax and learning that no government provisions were likely to be forthcoming from that source, he sailed in haste to Rhode Island and purchased goods far beyond the amount of credit allowed him by DesBarres. In a letter sent to the latter by Venture when in Halifax, September 20, 1785, the following sentence is found:—

“Let me entreat my dear Governor to be very attentive and alert to baffle the insidious and malignant machinations of this place, for I can assure you that nothing is left in silence, nor anything unattempted that can lead to the destruction of your Government.” DesBarres justly censured Governor Parr of Nova Scotia in the following words:—

“If no improper motives had been permitted to operate on Governor Parr’s mind, he would have left in the Royal instructions to him, not only ample justification for indulging a free exercise of humanity in relieving the distresses of the infant colony; but also that it was His Majesty’s absolute command he should do so, viz., ‘In case of distress in any of our Plantations, you shall, upon application of the respective governors thereof to you, assist them with what aid the condition and safety of Our Province under your government can spare’”.

Venture’s well meant efforts to help DesBarres were the means of involving him in more trouble. Besides loading the *St. Peter* in Rhode Island he chartered three other vessels on his own responsibility and loaded them with supplies for Sydney. This involved him in an obligation of double the £800 which had been provided by DesBarres. Payment was made in drafts on the Agent of the British Government in Halifax who had no funds to meet them and reported the matter to Lord Sydney in London, referring in his letter to the “most extraordinary opposition of the people and government of Nova Scotia to His Majesty’s Intention of forming a settlement at Cape Breton”. In reply the Agent was told that the Treasury refused to give directions for the acceptance of Venture’s bills as they should have been drawn by the Governor, who was alone responsible for the proper expenditure of money. Venture on returning to Cape Breton was driven eastward by violent gales and, failing to make land, shaped his course for England. On arriving at Cowes in January, 1786, he reported to the Colonial office, informing them of the conditions in Cape Breton. He was ordered to take the vessel to the Thames and deliver her to agents of the Government.

Meanwhile the non-arrival of Venture’s vessel and the non-payment of his drafts had created consternation both in Cape Breton and in the New England States. Several hundred Loyalists had embarked or were ready to embark for Cape Breton and they were much embarrassed. DesBarres, to meet the emergency, was forced to sell some of his own properties and to mortgage the remainder. His enemies in Nova Scotia made the most of these misfortunes and sent the bad news everywhere in the hope of injuring him and his Colony. In the meantime DesBarres had been seeking relief from another source—the military; their refusal to help him raised fresh antagonisms, and

precipitated a very serious crisis. A large quantity of provisions for the use of the settlers had been brought from England on the ship *President* in the autumn of 1785, and they had been temporarily placed in the military store-house, which was under the control of Colonel Yorke of the 33rd Regiment. When DesBarres requested that these supplies be delivered to him Yorke refused, acting on orders from Major General Campbell, Commander-in-Chief at Halifax, who had instructed him on November 17th to give out no supplies except to soldiers or to those who had received permission from himself (Campbell). The action of the latter was arbitrary and unwarranted because he was aware that the supplies had been consigned to Governor DesBarres for the colonists and not for the troops.

The Governor remonstrated with Yorke, but to no purpose. A Council meeting was then convened on November 18th and the Provost Marshal was ordered to take supplies from the store-house. He demanded the key from the Colonel and the assistance of troops in removing the goods. Yorke refused and declared that any soldier who gave assistance would receive 1000 lashes. DesBarres was unwilling to go to extremes and the tense situation continued until December 6, when a ship, loaded with rations arrived and thus relieved the tension. But Colonel Yorke became active and when the Provost Marshal went to unload the vessel he found her in possession of a party of soldiers, who prevented the discharge of the cargo. The Chief Justice, thereupon, issued a warrant to apprehend the persons concerned in this act of violent resistance to legal authority, and Colonel Yorke and all others were required to assist in its execution. Yorke refused to surrender his men. The Council then advised the Governor to assemble the people by proclamation in order that they might be informed as to what had occurred, and to claim their support of His Majesty's Civil Government in Cape Breton. It was expected that they would not submit to starvation as a result of the measures adopted by the military authorities, without making a desperate effort to prevent it.

This action of the Council evidently frightened Colonel Yorke, for Lieutenant Norford, of the 33rd Regiment, a young officer of conciliatory disposition, interviewed the Governor and persuaded him to meet Colonel Yorke in the hope of arriving at some satisfactory understanding. The result was that 40,000 rations of provisions were au-

thorized to be placed at the disposal of the Governor, for which he gave his receipt. Part of these supplies only were then used, for just at this juncture, the *Amelia*, one of the vessels chartered in Rhode Island by Venture, arrived in the harbour, with provisions consigned to the Governor. It was found that Venture had purchased the vessel, and the captain produced a bill drawn on the Governor for £525, the price of the vessel. As the actions of those in charge of her were very suspicious and their papers of doubtful character it was decided by the Council that no payment should be made until Venture himself arrived to explain matters. The provisions which she had brought were unloaded and sufficed to supply the settlers until the middle of February, 1786, when it became necessary to ask for the remaining portion of the 40,000 rations in the military storehouse. Colonel Yorke refused to give it to the Governor, thus breaking his agreement; he claimed that the supplies were needed by the troops. When the settlers learned of this action they became incensed and threatened to take the foodstuffs by force. The Council, thereupon issued a warrant ordering an official to march with a body of men to the storehouse, and, if resisted, to break open the doors. All persons, civil and military were required to give assistance to this official. Action was delayed for a time owing to the influence of an intermediary who strove to bring about a reconciliation between Colonel Yorke and the Governor. He was not successful and the Council decided to take action. Lieutenant Norwood, who had brought about the former understanding, happened to be the officer in charge of the store-house. Colonel Yorke sent for him to give his instructions, which were to the effect that he and his troops were to fire on the crowd even if the Governor led them, and he promised support of the whole regiment. Norwood replied that he would not obey these orders, but would allow the store to be opened, as the warrant was under the Great Seal of the Island, and pointed out that the Civil Government was supreme over all persons, no matter what their degree or profession. Norwood was relieved and confined to his room. The regiment was kept in readiness, and fresh sentries posted. On March 2nd the Provost Marshal read the warrant in the presence of two justices, and proclaimed the Riot Act. He tried to force open the door and, being opposed, took the military officer in command a prisoner,

but the latter was immediately rescued by the troops. Yorke then asked that no action be taken until he could obtain legal advice. The opinions of the Chief Justice and Attorney General, to the effect that the power of the Civil Government was supreme, were sent to him. The people, magistrates and Grand Jury then carried the matter to the Supreme Court, and the Chief Justice issued warrants for arresting the officers and soldiers who had resisted the warrant. After this action, parties of soldiers led by officers fully armed paraded the town in a threatening manner. The Governor's house and other places were guarded by militia, whom the regulars frequently insulted, but the former and the inhabitants were careful to keep the peace and no open disturbance occurred.

At this juncture another method of obtaining provisions was decided upon by the Governor and Council. Sometime previously a small brigantine (*Rachael*) from Quebec, laden with flour and biscuits, had been driven into Arichat and had been detained there by the ice. It was decided to obtain these provisions either by purchase or by seizure. But the task of reaching the vessel, one hundred miles away, through deep snow and extensive forests, seemed insuperable. However, a hundred settlers, driven by hunger, volunteered to go under an official provided with a warrant. The journey was a trying one, but was successfully accomplished. The master of the brigantine was glad to sell her together with the cargo. The settlers cut a way through the ice and the vessel reached open water and sailed to Louisbourg. When news of her arrival reached Sydney, DesBarres happened to be in the country. The Council, learning that Colonel Yorke proposed to send a force to Louisbourg to seize the cargo, held a meeting under the presidency of the Chief Justice and decided to send an official, representing the Government, to take control. At the same time, having learned that the Collector of Customs was making trouble about admitting the vessel and allowing discharge of the cargo, acting in opposition to the Governor, he was suspended from office. There was no further trouble and the provisions were sufficient to relieve the distress of the people for some time. On March 1, 1786, an address was presented to the Governor, signed by 140 inhabitants of Sydney, praising him for his conduct, and censuring the actions of the military; and on the 8th a large deputation of French Acadians thanked him for his kindness to them.

The Governor kept the authorities in England informed as to these unfortunate occurrences, but he did not receive any satisfaction. On the contrary, he was greatly distressed by having bills, which he had drawn for provisions, dishonoured, the reason alleged being that he had given large quantities to persons who were not entitled to them. It was decided by the Council to send the Chief Justice to England accompanied by the Examiner of Public Accounts, bearing all necessary documents, for the purpose of interviewing the Colonial Secretary regarding the affairs of the Island. They arrived in London in July, 1786. Their efforts on behalf of DesBarres as well as of the Colony were ineffectual. Two officials, Hurd¹ and Uncle, who had been suspended by the Governor, and Colonel Yorke had also arrived in London and filed many complaints against the Governor with the Secretary. The Chief Justice asked to see these statements but was refused, being told that they would be sent to DesBarres himself, but this was never done. He tried to see Lord Sydney a number of times but was granted only one interview. Complaints had also been sent to London by various parties in Cape Breton, including a number of officials who disliked DesBarres. One of these was in the form of a petition entitled "a petition and remonstrance of the principal inhabitants of Cape Breton". Only eleven names were appended to this and some were stated by DesBarres to be forgeries.

The Chief Justice was able to ascertain that through the reports of Yorke, Hurd and Uncle, a strong prejudice against DesBarres had been created in the Colonial office and that it had been decided to recall the Governor. He also was informed that

"No consideration of the Distress of the people, or to encourage their staying in, or Orders to come to the

¹. Thomas Hurd was appointed Surveyor-General of Cape Breton on March 24, 1785. When he arrived in the Island, he found that Wm. DesBarres, son of the Governor, was acting in this capacity, and he continued this work for a month longer. This greatly angered Hurd, who complained about it, and stated that young DesBarres was entirely unqualified for such a job. This was the beginning of ill-will towards the Governor, which continued until next spring, when he was suspended by the Governor. Hurd then accused DesBarres of bad treatment and complained to the Home Government.

The charges made against the Governor by various parties chiefly related to personal graft, e. g., selling cattle which were bought for the use of the Government, and keeping the proceeds, employing men and material in the construction of a mill on his private property at the expense of Government, selling Government stores for his own gain, etc. None of these charges were established. DesBarres vehemently denied their truth, and asked for an inquiry in London.

Colony, would be sufficient to procure them Provisions from the Crown—that it seemed determined to leave the Island to its own natural Advantages, to become populous or not in the ordinary course of events”.

Thus the Home authorities broke faith with the settlers of Cape Breton, whereas in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, thirty thousand Loyalists were provided for until they were satisfactorily settled.

The opinion of Lord Sydney regarding the Governor at this time is found in a letter, now in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (Vol. 315, Document No. 8), which reads as follows:—

Whitehall, Nov. 30th, 1786

Sir:

Your letter of the 28th February came to hand a few days before the arrival of Chief Justice Gibbons, and by him were delivered to me your dispatches of the 7th June with the Minutes of the Council of the island of Cape Breton, and sundry vouchers and other papers intended to justify the Expences you have incurred, as well as to elucidate certain Transactions which have taken place since your arrival upon that Island. I have likewise received by another conveyance your letter of the 24th of July, giving an account of your proceedings in consequence of my Dispatches to you of the 19th April inclosing at the time a Statement of your Services and explaining the Difficulties you have had to encounter, situated as you have been with regard to Military power in providing for the accommodation of the Troops and the subsistence of His Majesty's Subjects settled upon that island, who, you represent without your assistance, must have perished for want of Food.

I have laid all these Letters and papers before the King, and have faithfully reported to His Majesty the communications which have been made to me by the Chief Justice upon several subjects wherein you imagined some explanation might be necessary.

His Majesty constantly inclined to view the Conduct of his Servants in the most favorable Light, always feels concern when their proceedings do not appear to him to merit commendation.

His Majesty has in various Instances observed a disposition in You to encourage a disunion of affection between His Subjects residing on the island of Cape Breton, and those in the Province of Nova Scotia. From whatever cause Your suspicions of the jealousy of the latter of the increasing Importance of Cape Breton may have been entertained, your proceedings upon these occasions appear to me injudicious, and likely in their consequence to be productive of very mischievous Effects.

I wish that the proceedings I have just taken notice of were the only cause for dissatisfaction, but from the measures which have been pursued for depriving nearly the whole of the Civil Officers of the island of their Employments, and the constant disputes and disagreements which have taken place between you and the Military, and the complaints which have in consequence been exhibited against you, many doubts have been entertained of the rectitude of your conduct, or at least of your prudence and discretion, which neither the reasoning contained in Your Dispatches, or the Information given by the Chief Justice, are sufficient to remove; upon these accounts His Majesty has thought it fit that I should signify to You His Royal command for your return to England as soon as possible, to give an account of your proceedings which you will do upon the receipt of this Dispatch, leaving the Island in the charge of the Senior Councillor until such time as you may return thither, or that His Majesty may determine upon naming a Successor to You.

With regard to the accounts of Expences incurred by you for the purchase of Provisions, and for the other purposes, the Vouchers for which your secretary produced, my opinion upon several expenditures has been conveyed to the Lords of the Treasury who will of course cause their determination thereupon to be communicated to you. I was sorry to take notice upon an examination of these accounts that charges were inserted of a Nature which consistently with your duty to the Public you ought to have discountenanced, instead of promoting, and that purchases of Provisions and other Supplies were made by you for the use of Persons, whose Situations did not entitle them to such an Indulgence whereby a considerable Expence has been unnecessarily incurred.

I am Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

SYDNEY.

The Chief Justice remained in London until the summer of 1787 and then returned to Sydney, where he arrived in September.

On July 19, 1787, the Governor received a despatch from Lord Sydney, from which the following extract may be quoted:—

“His Majesty, constantly inclined to view the conduct of His Servants in the most favorable Light, always feels great concern, when their Proceedings do not appear to him to merit Commendation”.....

“From Measures which have been pursued for depriving nearly the whole of the Civil Officers of the Island

of their Employments and the constant Disputes and Disagreements which have taken place between you and the Military, and the Complaints which have in consequence been exhibited against you, many Doubts have been entertained of the rectitude of your conduct, or, at least, of your Prudence and Discretion, which neither the reasoning contained in your Dispatches, on the information given by the Chief Justice, are sufficient to remove; Upon these accounts His Majesty has thought it fit, that I should signify to you His Royal Commands for your Return to England as soon as possible, to give an Account of your Proceedings, which you will do upon Receipt of this Dispatch, leaving the Island in the charge of the Senior Councillor until such time as you may return thither, or that His Majesty may determine upon naming a Successor to you".

Another dispatch conveyed the intelligence that Lieut.-Colonel McCarmick had been appointed to act as Lieut.-Governor of Cape Breton during DesBarres' absence. This officer arrived at Sydney on October 11, and DesBarres departed for Europe, having chartered an old brigantine to convey him thither. Having been warned that those who claimed money from him, because of the bills which had been dishonoured, were waiting to have him arrested, he sailed to the Island of Jersey where he arrived on December 7th. He sent a requisition to Lord Sydney asking for a guarantee of immunity from arrest so that he might safely visit London, but this was refused. He, thereupon, went secretly in disguise to England and reached Whitehall in April 1788.

The following years were spent in incessant efforts to get redress and payment for his losses from the government. During a considerable period he was secluded in a sanctuary, harassed by clamorous creditors, and even avoiding his friends, in the hope that the calumnies which had been heaped upon him by his enemies might be removed by means of an official inquiry. On investigating in the Secretary's office, the documents containing the charges against him were found to have mysteriously disappeared. On June 1, 1789, DesBarres had his last official interview with Lord Sydney, who quitted office a few days afterwards. Thereafter, DesBarres' case was in the hands of the Treasury and, in December, £10,000 were placed in the hands of bankers, with instructions

“to discharge sundry bills, drawn by Lieut.-Governor DesBarres in the course of his carrying on the Public Service in Cape Breton—directing an Allowance to be made to the holders of these Bills for noting, Protests, and Interests, at the Rate of Five per centum per annum, from the time the Bills were due to the date of payment thereof”.

There was trouble with some of the bill-holders, who had made seizures of DesBarres' property beyond the amount of their claims, and this led to an official arbitration which continued during the next two years. The arbitrators at the conclusion of their work stated to the Lords of the Treasury that

“through a long investigation, the general conduct of Lieutenant Governor DesBarres, during his administration of Cape Breton, had come before them, and that it appeared to them that he had exerted himself to establish and support the Government committed to his charge in a manner deserving commendation.”

The Bankers, by means of the said sum of £10,000 paid bills and demands amounting to £7171-16-11, as well as £2828-3-1 for expenses, noting, protests and interest charges. They presented a further list of bills and demands, for which payment had been asked, amounting, exclusive of expenses, to £6120-9-5. But no further sum was granted to pay these. Year after year DesBarres kept up his fight with the Government for reimbursement and for an official inquiry regarding the charges against him which had been sent to the Colonial officer. He sent a memorial to the King. Sir William Dolben brought up his case in the House of Commons. All in vain!

In 1792 he again addressed Lord Sydney, no longer a member of the Cabinet, in the hope that he would aid him. This private correspondence, containing DesBarres' important Statement regarding his career is now in my possession, and is here reproduced.

Letter from J. F. W. DesBarres to the Rt. Hon. Lord Sydney October 15th, 1792:—

My Lord,

Your Lordship may be surprised at receiving a Letter from me, but I take leave in the outset to inform your Lordship that it proceeds from motives, respectful, friendly, and conciliatory, and I trust it will be considered in that light.

The enclosed paper contains a moderate Statement of my case from the beginning, and as it now stands. It is meant to renew in your memory the context thereof, which in the course of time may have been in some degree effaced.

I do by no means intend to reproach your Lordship: good men have often erred, and done injury unintentionally, or without adverting to the length of mischievous consequences. None will ever pretend to deny that your Lordship has injured me most fatally in my Reputation, in my Rank, in my Fortune, in the happiness of my mind, and in every point and relation that is dear to man; for though it was your Duty to receive every complaint against me, it was also your Duty to have given me Justice, which is invariably allowed to all other Officers in similar cases, in order to their vindication, by the rules of Natural Justice, the Constitution, and of Policy, and not having done so, you have in effect made the accusations your own, fastened a stigma upon me, and cast a Shade of Guilt over my affairs, which has deprived me to this day of Justice in every Department also, and subjected me all along to sufferings in quest of Justice, infinitely worse than the most sanguinary laws could have inflicted had I been guilty, and infinitely worse than Death.

If this arose from misapprehension or error on the part of your Lordship as a Man of Justice and Humanity, or if you did not apprehend the length of the consequences, I trust that, as a man of Humanity and Justice, you will now be supremely happy at an opportunity of doing everything in your power to repair the mischief.

Upon this Ground, and with this Motive, I address your Lordship, and at your being pleased to meet me fairly and nobly, thereupon, cannot fail being attended with the result of Justice, which has been so long withheld from me, I shall be ready to forget and to be reconciled, while a satisfaction of a more essential and sublime nature will fall to your Lordship's share.

Whatever may be the importance of every other object involved in my case, the vindication of my honor is with me the transcendent and indispensable point: I have prepared myself for a trial, and notwithstanding the disadvantages which my case evinces I have been subjected to in that respect, I have materials that must infallibly bring my honorable acquittal, and show my opponents in their proper colors. So far as my affairs have been investigated, they have been found proper and honorable throughout: Mr. Dundas has signified as much to me, and the Board of Auditors of Public Accounts have declared it to me.

After the course of slander I have endured for years in the face of the world, and even by the sanction of the public officers, I do not derive, or feel, all the satisfaction my mind desires in those private-like declarations of my Innocence, to which an acquittal by public trial would be the only adequate remedy, without your Lordship's explicit concurrence in the same, as the minister who originally

ought to have indulged me with a trial. I therefore request you will be pleased to signify to me, whether you think me guilty or not, and I am the more urged to make this request, because it would be of course improper that I should farther expect your Lordship's good offices, or attempt to attain them, without an explicit declaration of your conviction of my Innocence. I conclude then, expressing my hopes that your Lordship will feel justly, and generously, upon this occasion, and that you will be pleased to consider such a proposition from me entitled to the honor of your Lordship's direct answer, for, or against me without delay.

I have the honor to be with great respect,

My Lord,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

J. F. W. DESBARRES.

Eaton Street, 15th October, 1792.
Right Honorable Lord Viscount Sydney.

STATEMENT

Lieut.-Governor DesBarres having finished the course of his studies in his native Country came to England, and having had the honor of being presented by General Michelson, General Desaguiliers, and Baron Hope, the then Ambassador of the States of Holland, to the then Duke of Cumberland, resolved to become a British subject, and was placed under the patronage of His Royal Highness in the Royal Academy at Woolwich.

Eager for active service he went as a Lieutenant in the 60th Regiment to America in the beginning of the war, 1755, and after serving in conjunction with Sir Willham Johnson in the earlier operations, he was ordered by Lord Amherst under General Wolfe in the Expedition against Louisbourg. General Wolfe was pleased to mention him in a particular manner to his late Majesty, and to desire him in the Engineer Department for the Expedition against Quebec. The Employment and Approbation which the Hero honored him to the last was for similar reasons continued to him by the succeeding illustrious Commanders of that part of the Army, General Monckton, Marquis Townshend, General Murray, etc., and confirmed by that of the Commander-in-Chief. After assisting to project and delineate the Defences of the Dockyard and Harbor of Halifax, he was sent under General Amherst in the En-

gineer Line on the Expedition which recovered Newfoundland in the year 1762, and publicly thanked for contributing to the success against an Enemy superior in numbers and other circumstances. In the sequel, to gratify the wishes of his honored Commander, he surveyed some of the principal Harbours of the Island with a view to their Defence, and in 1763 returned to Halifax.

At this time he found himself in the identical Rank in the Army in which he had set out in the beginning of the war. The being employed in the manner mentioned had taken him out of the Line of the specific Regiment, and the accomplishment of the spontaneous promises of extraordinary promotion, which had been frequently made in the course, was frustrated as well through the rapid, and, sometimes, sudden succession of the immediate commanders, as the quick revolution of service and events, and, finally, through the distant situation at the time of the Commander-in-Chief's return to Europe.

After the peace of 1763, the Commander and officers of the Navy in North America, as well as Lord Egmont, who presided at the Admiralty, were extremely desirous of having the unexplored Coast and Harbours of North America surveyed for the exigencies of the Royal Navy and of commerce, and the promises of extraordinary promotion had been held up as formerly, to induce his undertaking the same, and often repeated in the course thereof.

These surveys took up ten years of most difficult, dangerous, and expensive employment on the spot under the Orders of the Admiralty Board. The publication of the same by the Royal pleasure in Britain, with the addition of adapting the Surveys of others to nautical purposes by the wish of every officer of any Distinction in the Navy, in order to benefit the Nation by a complete nautical Survey of all the North American Coasts and Harbors, took up ten years more of incessant and most expensive application under the auspices of the then Board of Trade. In the course it had actually been the means of saving the Fleets and Armies of this Country, with the millions of money spent on them, as well as benefited commerce in millions, and will forever continue to do so. When it was finished in the year 1783, he humbly preferred his claims to the promised promotion, and to a reimbursement of the expenses he had incurred in the prosecution thereof. The Admiralty Board settled what had been done under its own

Direction upon far more strict Ideas of economy indeed than the circumstances and indispensable exigencies of the service had permitted him to apply, and payment thereof was accordingly issued in the end of that year; but the remainder was left unsettled, and remains due to him to this day. Upon the reference, the Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council, in their Report to His Majesty, were pleased to express themselves as follows:—

“With respect to the losses which the Memorialist may have sustained in his profession of a Soldier, and in his private fortune, by devoting so many years of his Life to the execution of an arduous and difficult work, which must be productive of great benefit and utility, not only to your Majesty's Service, but also to the Public in general, we are not competent to form a judgment of the nature of those losses, sufficient to enable us to estimate the amount thereof, or to propose (did it belong to us to do so) an equivalent compensation; but we are nevertheless of opinion, that the Memorialist may be deserving of some mark of your Majesty's favor, as a farther reward for his Zeal, Activity and Ability, in prosecuting and completing so useful a work.”

To say nothing of the extraordinary promotion he had been entitled to expect in consequence of the Utility of his exertions, and the promises so often held up to him, it had then been incontrovertibly proved, that, had he not been originally taken out of the ordinary course of Regimental promotion, he could not have failed to obtaining a Lieutenant Coloneley; in the year 1775, one of his junior Officers, without any pretensions but that of the ordinary routine, was appointed to that Rank in it,—and in respect to the unsettled part of the expense of the Work, he would under the circumstances of the time, have been satisfied with what had been allowed to others for a similar object of far inferior Expense, Utility and Execution, though it was inadequate to the real amount.

In such privation of the promotion which was due to him, he felt a painful humiliation in the pity of those who knew him; but he has no words to express the mortification in its effectually holding up an appearance to the world at large as if he had not served His Gracious Sovereign with Zeal, Fidelity, and effect. He was naturally led to ascribe the nonpayment of his expenditures to the then late extinction of the Board of Trade, to the obvious embarrassments of Government at the close of a war unex-

ampled in expense and adversity, and to the unsettled State of Parties and of the Times, and though it subjected him to disagreeable embarrassments in the meantime, his hopes were supported in the confidence, that when more important concerns should permit attention to his case, His Majesty would not in the instance discourage Officers from acquiring, and exerting, useful accomplishments, nor would a great, liberal, and generous Nation desire to enjoy at the expense of his ruin the benefit of a work, which is universally allowed to be an unrivalled Monument of National Utility.

He had formerly, among many other points of Information tending to the benefit of this country, stated the great advantages in the annual employment of 300 decked Vessels and 1500 fishing Shallops, navigated by 11400 Seamen, and producing to the average amount of £412,000 sterling, besides other objects susceptible of being greatly enhanced in the more energetic hands of Britons, which France had derived from the Island of Cape Breton, the natural Key to the River St. Lawrence, and to the immense growing countries in the rear of the American States, as well as the natural Depôt for British Manufactures and Commerce between them, the West Indies, and Europe, and he had been directed to furnish a plan for its colonization.

In the year 1784, Government being desirous to enlarge the field of accommodation to the Loyalists and disbanded Troops, and others in destitute circumstances after the war, and to afford an Asylum to the Whale fisheries of Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Rhode Island, etc., who proposed to move under the British Government, His Majesty was pleased to appoint him Lieutenant Governor thereof with such attendant marks as evinced that it was intended shortly to indemnify his expenditures and to raise him to the Rank he had missed by being employed in extraordinary Duties, among which was the appointing him Commander-in-Chief of the Troops and Garrisons in Cape Breton and the neighboring Province of St. John's Island, with powers to assemble General Courts Martial, etc.

Accordingly, leaving Memorials for his claims in the hands of the respective Ministers, he departed in the firm resolution of realizing in a few years such a specimen of directing the new Colony to the natural destiny of its extraordinary Qualities and Situation, as could not fail

proving him a worthy object not only of retrospective Justice, but of further approbation and favor.

Government was in the course of supplying the Loyalists and disbanded Soldiers settling in Nova Scotia and in the other Colonies with provisions and other articles necessary to their circumstances, and the same was of course held out for such as might settle in Cape Breton; but upon a review in his own mind, from analogous experience of the natural intricacies and necessary requisites in commencing the Settlement of a Country entirely a Wilderness, he took the liberty of recommending at his departure the most serious and exact attention to the same, and it was solemnly promised that every requisite and support would be furnished; but the truth is that he was left entirely to his own personal exertions and resources. The difficulties particularly in finding provisions and necessaries to feed and shelter from the frosts and snows the indigent Loyalists and other starving Objects are inconceivable, and added to the annoyance of persons interested in defeating the measure of making Cape Breton a Province, but who were conscious they might attack him with greater safety than that measure of Government, threw him into embarrassments, well calculated to exercise the perseverance even of an Officer habituated, as he long had been, to struggle with difficulties, and determined on all occasions to sacrifice every personal consideration whatever to the accomplishment of his duty.

He had by the earliest opportunity reported the State of Affairs—what he had found indispensably necessary to be done in the meantime—and what he saw further necessary to be done. He had transmitted regularly and periodically the Accounts and Vouchers of the expenditure: and, though he can scarcely say, he had been favored with further correspondence than the Intelligence of his Bills having begun to be taken into a course of payment, he persevered in exerting every possible means, feeling that the Object of his Mission would in a few years be accomplished, after which he might enjoy infinite satisfaction in the resulting advantages to his Country, and in the gracious approbation of his Sovereign.

Accordingly, such had been the unexampled success of a rational plan and the Superstructure of laudable Industry, that though he was not there above three years, the Colony had in one year exported £40,000 through the

Custom House, which ultimately centered in Britain. Nor is there a doubt it would at this time produce half a million sterling annually, besides the collateral advantage of a proportional nursery of Seamen, etc., had he not been arrested in the course, and matters been subsequently administered with the consequence even of annihilating the advantage of what had been executed.

The combination, alluded to, existing in the Province of Nova Scotia, had from the beginning left no stone unturned to disseminate the most astonishing falsehoods respecting the New Colony and his measures all over Britain, and in correspondence even with persons in the Public Offices, where the same met with greater success than, to say the least, were becoming upon any principle of Justice or Policy. The Military Detachment carried from Halifax the prejudices prevalent there, and so far from co-operating, as was intended, annoyed him with every possible embarrassment. Some of the Officers appointed on the Civil Establishment and Military Staff of Cape Breton, consisting partly of imposing Loyalists, partly of persons sent from Britain unfit to be trusted with public Objects, and whose improper Conduct he was unable to indulge, perceiving such opposition, took advantage and conspired to address to the Secretary of State a Remonstrance and Petition, charging him with the Crimes, which either themselves had committed or had no existence but in their own depraved invention.

In this Paper the pretended Complainants stiled themselves the Principal Inhabitants of Cape Breton, though there were only eleven signatures, several of which were forged, and of persons unknown there, and that all the other Inhabitants respected, and acted with the utmost cordiality to him. It was transmitted with Lieutenant Hurd of the Navy, the Surveyor General and one of the subscribers, who delivered it into the Secretary of State's office in 1786.

Thereupon, it was resolved to call him home to answer but unhappily, without affording him the Justice, which is in every instance indulged to other Officers in similar circumstances—a knowledge of the particulars on the Spot, where he might have had the Opportunity, and certainly could not have failed, to collect and transmit the most satisfactory means of elucidation and refutation, and thereby have prevented all the fatal consequences to the

public and to himself. On the contrary a communication of the Remonstrance and Petition was refused to an Officer, whom he had sent to explain the state of the Colony. Every other Calumny which had before been thrown into the public circle were listened to in the public Offices: persons interested in misrepresenting, or who could not be the Judges, or informed, of his conduct were even encouraged to declare without pledging them to responsibility for the truth. In short, his character was perfectly blasted under the auspices of the public Offices, while conscious of the Zeal, rectitude and propriety of his measures, and intent only on carrying on his Duty, he was ignorant, and could not form an Idea of what was carrying on against him at a distance.

From the matter thus collected in the Secretary of State's Office, reports were made to the Treasury upon some of his amounts, importing that he had raised Troops without the authority of Parliament, and had raised an Armament to invade an Island belonging to a Sovereign in amity with his Majesty: an official Gentleman, of whose good sense and Duty something more reasonable might be expected, did even assert that he intended rendering himself independent in North America.

From all these causes, his credit was stopped without providing for the payment of what had been incurred before the receipt of the countermand, and, to say nothing of the open amounts, the Bills he had negotiated under protest, with expenses, Interest and damages, whereby he was overwhelmed with distress, and his real and personal property everywhere seized by, and pledged to the public Creditors.

Upon his arrival in England early in the year 1788, it was signified that every justice would be done to him—that he was not superceded, nor was there any thought of superceding him, as he had received the appointment as a mark of the Royal approbation for services, and Lieut. Colonel Macarmick had been sent out to act as Lieut.-Governor of Cape Breton only during his absence to answer in England—that Official Copies of the Representations or Complaints would be furnished, as well as an impartial trial instituted—and the amounts of his Disbursements for the support of the infant Colony would be immediately settled and paid.

He supported for a time this horrid Situation with a

reliance on these assurances, explaining all the points, which have been proposed to him on every subject, and denying himself the satisfaction of seeing his friends until his character should be cleared from the unmerited Imputations by the expected trial.

He was intitled to be informed of his answers and of the complaints, as well as to have a trial, and to be relieved from the distress of his advances for the public Service: these rights were of course admitted to him, but they were delayed from one promised time to another, and so forth. The petition and remonstrance was found missing from the Secretary of State's office: Lieutenant Hurd was found to be carrying it about among Lieut.-Governor DesBarres' friends, in order to destroy his character in their estimate. Lieut. Governor DesBarres remonstrated to the Secretary of State's office against such conduct—persevered in his requisitions for a trial, and that Lieutenant Hurd should be compelled to support his accusations. Lieut. Hurd was notwithstanding sent out in an official situation, and though he previously confessed to the Principal and Undersecretaries of State his inability to support the accusations, and that the forged signatures were pointed out to them, Lieut. Governor DesBarres was sent to the Treasury by a Reference for the settlement of his accounts without any mark of the restoration of his Character and honor destroyed in both offices by all means mentioned, whereby he could hardly expect the necessary attention and expedition at the Treasury.

Accordingly, he solicited long in vain. After some time, Lieut. Drummond of the Navy, one of the calumniators who had been much attended to in public Offices, obtained a reference to the Comptrolers of the Army accounts of claims and complaints he had presented through the house of Champion and Dison, Merchants of London. The Comptrolers, upon a full Investigation, found them to be the reverse of what Lieut. Drummond had represented, and declared that Lieut. Governor DesBarres had done his Duty. He hoped thereupon that this Elucidation would point out the propriety of going into every other matter, which would undoubtedly be found to be of a similar nature—but in vain.

The house of Rashleigh and Company, Merchants in London, had also been early led to convey, and urge, in the public offices misrepresentations from Nova Scotia,

wherein at the time in question Mr. Alderman Brook Watson spontaneously confessed to Lieut. Governor DesBarres that he had been enormously deceived, expressing his infinite regret for the part he had happened to act, and declaring his readiness to come forward and acknowledge the same.

At last upon the conclusion of an Arbitration between him and another of the Caluminators, who had made, and presented, through the house of Harrison, Bainbridge and Company, exorbitant charges against him and Government for the public Service of Cape Breton, in the investigation of which the Arbitrators, after taking a view incidentally of his Administration in Cape Breton, thought it but Justice to address their opinion of the propriety and honor thereof to the Lords of the Treasury, and a request that Justice might be done to him by an Official Investigation and Settlement. Lieut. Governor DesBarres, in September 1791, made a Requisition to the present Secretary of State to be officially informed of his answer and of the complaints, as well as for a trial, and the settlements of his accounts, with compensation for the losses he had undeservedly sustained. The Secretary was pleased to answer, that, as his predecessor had referred the Settlement of the public accounts of Cape Breton to the Treasury, he could not take up the consideration of the case until such Settlement were made, and, referring Lieut. Governor DesBarres to the Treasury, authorised him to urge the same—whereupon he was sent to the Commissioners of the public Accounts.

The Candor and Earnestness expressed in the answer alluded to of Mr. Dundas, led Lieut. Governor DesBarres to cherish the hope that delays would be no longer indulged, and that accordingly he would be enabled, by a settlement and arrangement, in the course of the winter, of every Object, to return to America in the last Spring, in order as well to restore the Colony of Cape Breton, which he understands has been almost ruined since his departure, reduced to be only the empty name of a Government, or Colony, and, in such state, an useless burthen to the Nation, as to recover the fragments of his Estates and property, which had been seized by the public Creditors. When he found that the Spring had elapsed to no purpose, he urged, and was encouraged to believe, that a Report would be made upon the accounts, at least, before the late

adjournment of the Board of Auditors for this Season—and, therein, also he has been disappointed.

At an Interview since, Mr. Dundas was pleased to declare that there was no complaint or umbrage, of any kind, in his Office against Lieut. Governor DesBarres—that nothing obstructed taking up the case but the Settlement of the public accounts. Thereupon, Lieut. Governor DesBarres returned to the latter with a Requisition to be informed if they had any charges to make after their long Investigation of the public accounts and of the measures, or any, and what doubts of the rectitude of the same? And Sir John Dick in the name of the Board emphatically declared they had none whatever. Upon urging his anxiety for their Report, an indefinite promise was expressed that it might take place in November, with an indication, however, of its being much later.

Thus the sole Object before the auditors of the public accounts is to ascertain the balance owing to Lieut. Governor DesBarres by Government; for it is allowed a considerable one is due; there is no doubt, and the vast quantity of extrinsic matter already proposed to, and satisfactorily explained by him, evinces that the specific Subject, belonging to the Investigation of their Department, is so far exhausted, that the space of an hour more, exclusively applied, might produce their Report; and if it is deferred until the time of the year when the accumulation of other public business will interfere, there will remain no space for considering and arranging the other far more important and urgent points of his case and of the Colony, whereby another year will be lost.

Lieut. Governor DesBarres is averse from the Idea and language of complaint, and, therefore, it has been avoided in the above general State of his case to give any detail of the innumerable Vexations he has suffered in the Course: while however they are severely felt, and that every one must confess it impossible to reconcile the whole unhappy contest with the principles of natural Justice, of the constitution, and of policy, the most sincere personal respect, as well as the universal veneration, for the abilities and rectitude of His Majesty's confidential Servants induce presuming with confidence to assert, that a true Information of the real state thereof must have been hitherto, by some means or other, prevented from reaching them—or what evidently tended so much to the public advantage

would of course have been honored with their Encouragement and Support, instead of being repressed, and, thus, suffered to lie over from Year to Year; nor could a faithful and active Servant of the Crown be subjected so long to lie under a privation of the Justice of the Service and of common Justice, and to be restrained from exerting his abilities for the public, and his own advantage.

Lord Sydney's reply to DesBarres' letter of October 15th was as follows:—

3rd November, 1792

Sir:

Your letter of the 15th of last month inclosing a paper, which you inform me contains a statement of your case, has lately been received by me.

I certainly cannot at this moment call to my recollection the various circumstances which occurred during the time you were employed in the office of Lieut.-Governor of Cape Breton, and must therefore trust to my memory for such particulars relative to your case, as will enable me to reply to your letter.

At the time I had the honour of recommending to His Majesty, I had no other motive than a desire to assist an officer who appeared to me to have served well, and to have received less recompence than he had deserved, and who was likely to render further services in the particular part of his Majesty's dominions to which he was then to be sent. Under those circumstances it must naturally have been my wish to view with a favorable eye every part of his conduct. I soon however found that the public service did not go on prosperously at Cape Breton, and that several proceedings had taken place, the propriety of which appeared extremely questionable. Therefore, notwithstanding the opinion which I had originally formed of your character, I thought it my duty to recall you from thence.

The accounts referred to me from the Treasury, after undergoing the usual course of examination, were reported upon according to the light in which, at the time, they appeared to me to stand, and in the several reports which were made, I had certainly no other intention than to do justice between you and the public. Those accounts are now, I understand, under the inspection of the Auditors, who will no doubt pronounce upon them according to the Vouchers which may be produced, and it will by no means be a matter of dissatisfaction to me if their Report should not happen to coincide with that which I made upon them in the shape in which they appeared before me.

In the event of your explaining satisfactorily the parts of your accounts which appeared exceptionable, I have no hesitation in acknowledging to you that, had I continued in office, my duty would have led me to investigate the pro-

ceedings to which I have alluded without feeling that I could incur the imputation of being guided by my prejudice against you.

I have been drawn into some detail, but, I trust that my answer will not appear the less direct and explicit from that circumstance, when it is to be applied to so general a question as that which you have put to me.

Major DesBarres.

Three years later, DesBarres again addressed Lord Sydney as follows:—

My Lord,

As I have now, after so many years attendance, some prospect of bringing my business to a Conclusion, I am persuaded that your Lordship, from your known regard to Justice, will not hesitate in answering this address.

Your Lordship is too well acquainted with the Reports which induced His Majesty through your Representation to recall me from the Government of Cape Breton. I am ready to admit that the absurd and contradictory charges urged against me might have prevailed on your Lordship to credit them; as you could not possibly suppose that they would have been alleged without some foundation.

However, my Character, my Honor and Fortune have been essentially injured. If your Lordship should therefore be still of Opinion that these charges could be supported, I must request your Lordship explicitly to say so; because I may then with propriety (sanctioned by your Lordship's authority) apply to His Majesty for an enquiry into my conduct. On the other hand, if your Lordship, after so much Official Information as you must have received, is now convinced that my conduct has not been reprehensible, I trust your Lordship will be pleased to express your sentiments in my Justification.

I am sensible that in your Lordship's arduous Department it was impossible for you to investigate at all times the Truth or Falsity of Reports, and that you were often reduced to the necessity of acting on them for His Majesty's Service.

In your Lordship's Personal Capacity, I have nothing to complain of. I apply to your Lordship in your former Official Situation as Secretary of State: I hope my Request is neither importunate nor unreasonable. Your Lordship's Compliance with either alternative, I shall ever esteem a very high Obligation.

I have the Honor to be with the greatest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient and most humble Servant,

J. F. W. DESBARRES.

Eaton Street, 23rd October, 1795.

This letter brought no satisfaction from Lord Sydney, for, a few months later DesBarres sent him another communication, as follows:—

Eaton Street, 11th February, 1796.

My Lord:—

I have repeatedly applied to the Treasury for Copies of Your Lordship's Official Reports on my Conduct at Cape Breton that I might have a fair opportunity of obviating all objections and misconceptions. The reason alleged against granting my request was, that it is not the official Practice to grant such Copies, as Remarks and Observations on particular transactions might occasion personalities which might be of disagreeable and serious Consequences.

However, I can assure your Lordship, that my only Motive is to have in my Power to convince you that I have always acted as a Man of Honor and Integrity, in strict obedience to my Orders and with Zeal for His Majesty's Service. I wish to be restored to your Lordship's Esteem, and to shew myself not unworthy of your generous Exertions to obtain justice for an old and injured Officer. I flattered myself that your Lordship would be pleased to find that you had been deceived by artful and interested Men, and would anxiously exert yourself to see me restored to Rank, Fortune and Character. I expected this, my lord, from the sentiments I entertained of your Lordship's principles and your Regard to Justice. If I had not entertained such Ideas I would not have repeatedly supplicated Justice as a favor, when I might have demanded it as a Right; my Style would have been adapted to the occasion. But I only sincerely wished to convince your Lordship's Understanding which had been imposed on: the goodness of your Heart I never doubted—I believed it hereditary in the Name. I was convinced, My Lord, that it was not necessary to prove my Spirit and Sense of injurious treatment by invidious personalities when I was suing your Lordship for Redress: my Services as a Soldier wanted not such feeble support.

So far, I think it necessary to explain myself, and as I have fruitlessly applied, both to the Treasury and to the Duke of Portland for a Copy of your Lordship's Reports, I must now entreat you to furnish me with one yourself, and I am perfectly persuaded that I shall be able to clear up everything to your Lordship's entire satisfaction, and for this purpose I hope your Lordship will condescend to indulge me in this Respect, both on your own account and mine.

I anxiously wish to be restored to your good opinion, fully persuaded that it depends on your Lordship alone to give me the effectual means of so doing; and perfectly confiding in your good Intentions, I remain with the greatest Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

J. F. W. DESBARRES.

Finally, in 1795 he prepared a remarkable document, which was printed, for presentation to the Government. It was entitled

A STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL DESBARRES FOR CONSIDERATION

Respecting his services, from the year 1755, to the present time—in the capacity of an Officer and Engineer during the war of 1756—The utility of his surveys and publications of the coasts and harbours of North America, intitled, *The Atlantic Neptune*,—and his proceedings and conduct as Lieutenant Governor and Commander in chief of His Majesty's Colony of Great Britain.

This work is now extremely rare. I know of only two copies in America, viz., those in the New York Public and John Carter Brown Libraries. It resembles a lawyer's brief, his case being stated with great elaboration and detail, accurate references to documents and letters being given. The labour of preparing it must have been enormous. It seems convincing to one who has the patience to read it. Yet it failed in his purpose, for it did not induce the British Government to satisfy his claims. He could not produce vouchers for many of his accounts and he was suspected of having made exaggerated statements. His final précis of claims is as follows:—

Arrears of Disbursements incurred in carrying on the Surveys of the Coasts and Harbours of Nova Scotia, and in preparing and supplying charts for the Public Service from 1763 to 1784, amounting to.... £8801-16-4

Arrears of Advance incurred in the Prosecution of his duty as Lieutenant Governor of Cape Breton, since the year 1784, amounting to..... £5516-18-101/2
Arrears of Salary, or equivalent allowance, amount to

The expenses accrued by Law Charges, Seizures, and Devastation of Property, Damages, Interests, etc., and the Sufferings, to which, in the long course of arduous and unremitting exertions he has unhappily been subjected, together with the disappointment of Military promotion and the acknowledged Utility of his services, are most humbly submitted, for equitable consideration, compensation, and remuneration.

DesBarres never returned to Cape Breton, though he retained the title of Lieut. Governor for several years after his departure from the Island in 1787. Supposing that the title implied payment of the salary, he made application for it, but even this was denied him for several years. In the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (Vol. 332) there is a document, entitled "Estimate of the Charge of defraying the Civil Establishment of the Island of Cape Breton, January 1 to December 31, 1802", in which the following item is found:—

Allowance to Lieut.-Colonel DesBarres equal to half his salary as Lieutenant Governor of Cape Breton from the 7th of October, 1787, to the close of the year 1793.....£1558-4-4½

This long deferred compensation, indicative of some softening of the official heart in London, must have been very welcome to DesBarres, whose cash resources had always been slender.

In reviewing the amazing record of DesBarres' administration of Cape Breton the following conclusions seem justified.

He entered on his work with a statesmanlike comprehension of the possibilities which a proper development of the Island offered.

He was intensely ambitious and exhibited indomitable energy and persistence in coping with difficulties which confronted him throughout. He had sincere sympathy for the Loyalists who had given up everything in the American Colonies and had come to Cape Breton to find homes under the British flag, and he treated them most generously. In times of emergency, when starvation threatened, he dared to break through official restrictions, contracted debts on his own account, and even mortgaged his own possessions, in order that the lives of his people might be made safe. From the very beginning he was harassed by the secret machinations as well as by the overt acts of his enemies, who had their headquarters in Halifax. By them the minds of the authorities in London were poisoned against him. He was well aware of this and had the courage to express himself openly in regard to it. How powerless he was against the intriguers may be inferred from the following rebuke sent to him in a dispatch from Lord Sydney:—

"His Majesty had in various instances observed a disposition in you to encourage a disunion of affection be-

tween his subjects residing on the island of Cape Breton and those in the province of Nova Scotia. From whatever your suspicion of the jealousy of the latter of the increasing importance of Cape Breton may have been entertained, your proceedings upon these occasions appear to me to be injudicious and likely in their consequences to be productive of very mischievous effects. Many doubts have been entertained of the rectitude of your conduct, or at least of your prudence and discretion, which neither the reasoning contained in your despatches, nor the information given by the Chief Justice, are sufficient to remove."

DesBarres had an imperious nature, and when convinced of the righteousness of his cause chose forceful methods of procedure rather than those which evinced a tactful and conciliatory spirit. It is doubtful, however, if he would have succeeded no matter how moderate his course of action might have been. Nova Scotia was too resentful, too determined that he should be broken and that the development of Cape Breton should be a failure, to permit any method which the Governor might adopt to have a fortunate issue. The attitude of Lord Sydney is inexplicable. He had been responsible for the independent settlement of Cape Breton, and it might have been thought that he would have supported and encouraged his representative in order to justify his own judgment and safeguard his reputation. Yet, throughout, he allowed himself to be influenced by those who were intriguing against DesBarres, treated him in a petty, resentful spirit, failed to understand the difficulties with which the Governor had to contend, and finally, hampered the latter in every way, when he demanded a fair hearing and just dealing. His decision in 1787 to withhold further supplies from the Colony and to leave the settlers to shift for themselves, thus breaking the pledges under which they had gone to Cape Breton, can only be described as brutal and heartless.



J. F. W. DES BARRES

IN ADVANCED MANHOOD. FROM THE ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR OWNED BY PROFESSOR DES BARRES, SACKVILLE, N.B.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORSHIP OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND LAST YEARS

Although DesBarres never succeeded in obtaining redress from British Ministers for the injustice which he claimed to have suffered at their hands, nor reimbursement for his financial losses he was successful in minimising official prejudice against himself to such an extent that in May 1804 he obtained the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Prince Edward Island. As this province had been administered as a separate government since 1769, the opportunity offered the old man (at this time over eighty) none of the difficulties and perplexities which had confronted him from the beginning of his administration in Cape Breton. The island had a population of nearly seven thousand, mostly British, engaged mainly in farming and fishing. Considerable trade had developed with Newfoundland, the West Indies and the neighboring Canadian Provinces. The only cause of unrest was the condition of land tenure, for much of the island, after its acquisition by the British, had been granted to absentees, most of whom did not develop their properties, nor place settlers on their lands; consequently, large tracts were uninhabited. Some of the settlers, Loyalists, and disbanded soldiers, who had come to the island had proved unsatisfactory, because when the supplies which had been furnished them gratuitously in the first two or three years were no longer forthcoming, they became discontented and either became idlers or went to other parts, carrying complaints of ill-treatment. One of the most important colonization schemes was that of Lord Selkirk who brought about eight hundred Scottish people to the island in 1803; this effort was on the whole successful and added an important element to the population.

DesBarres expected to arrive at his post in the autumn of 1804, but, when ready to sail from England in September, adverse gales and the difficulty of arranging for proper convoy detained him until November, when he decided that it was too late to start for the island. He, therefore, obtained leave to remain in England until the following spring, and finally arrived in Charlottetown, the capital of the Province, on July 1st, 1805, being warmly welcomed by the people. Very soon he made visits to different parts of the island, studying the conditions of life

and gaining information which might be useful to him in his efforts to promote the welfare of the inhabitants. He soon realized that a burning question everywhere was that relating to land tenure. In November he met his first House of Assembly and addressed them. During the session it was decided to send a Memorial to the King pointing out the large percentage of proprietors who had failed to bring in settlers, develop their lands or pay their quit rents, whereby a large part of the colony was without inhabitants and entirely undeveloped; it was asked that this state of affairs should terminate. It would be interesting to know how the Governor felt when this reform movement confronted him, for, at this very time, he held a record as an absentee landlord, for he had lived in England many years, while holding large areas in Nova Scotia, which he had been accumulating since Canada had become entirely British. These he had been trying to develop by a rental system, with much trouble to himself, and, after his death, to his heirs. Moreover, he had failed in several instances to pay his quit rents to the Government, as well as to carry out other obligations. The old man must have been very cautious about expressing himself on this question in Prince Edward Island, and he seems to have avoided it as much as possible.¹ Indeed, on the very day on which the Memorial was adopted by the Assembly, the Governor sent a special message to the House on the "expediency of establishing with apposite regulations, a public market in Charlottetown"; this was safe ground.

DesBarres' favorite subject, which he tried to keep constantly before the people, was the Defence of the Island. The Assembly of 1806 discussed the matter seriously and asked the Governor to prepare a report on the state of the Militia, the quantities of arms, ammunition, etc. A return was immediately given and, as a result, the Assembly drew up an address in which they expressed concern for the defenceless condition of the island, requesting the Governor to ask the British Government to take steps to ensure their security. In 1807 the Supreme Court sent an address to the Lieut.-Governor, referring to his activity in making the Militia more effective, thanking him, as well, for his vigilant supervision of public expenditure. He also

¹. He was accused of trying to induce Scottish settlers to move to his properties in Nova Scotia.

urged on the British authorities the necessity of establishing a post office in Charlottetown and of endowing a public school for the island. In the same year he made himself unpopular by advocating a tax of a halfpenny an acre on all the land in the colony, so as to increase the revenue. Strong protests were sent to England, and it was suggested by some that DesBarres should be recalled. In 1808 he again urged the improvement of the defences, pointing out that relations between Great Britain and the United States were not satisfactory. The House deliberated on this message and declared that it was not in their power to provide means for supporting the Militia if they should be called out in time of war. This greatly disappointed DesBarres who stated to the House that "he had trusted that the justice and expediency of his recommendations would have appeared sufficiently obvious, important and forceful to prompt its successful result". In 1809 there was much anxiety over the attitude of the United States, and the Lieut.-Governor urged that they should be "in constant preparation for repelling all attempts, which possibly may be meditated against this colony". He also stated that he had induced Lieut.-General Sir George Prevost, Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia, to send an additional supply of arms and ammunition from Halifax.

In 1810, as the Assembly had failed to vote supplies for strengthening the Militia, the Lieut.-Governor expressed his disapproval in strong terms. In 1812 the Assembly were stirred to action and decided to establish a land tax, part of which should be spent on the Militia. When the United States declared war DesBarres displayed marked energy, urging the Assembly to greater activity, sending to Halifax for assistance, and doing all within his power to prepare the island against attack by the enemy. This was his last effort as Governor. The British authorities decided that, owing to war conditions, a younger man should undertake the responsibility of administering the colony, and DesBarres, ninety-two years of age, was recalled and given a pension. He left with the good will of the entire island. Age had subdued his old imperious spirit, and, while, during his tenure of office, he continued to exhibit tenacity of purpose and strength of character, he was able to assert himself with patience, forbearance, and tactfulness. The rest of his life was spent in Nova Scotia, his residence being in Halifax. The probability is that the

possession of large tracts of land in that Province led him to remain there, in the hope of being better able to look after the interests of his family. It now only remains to consider DesBarres' land ventures.

DESBARRES AS A LANDLORD

At the close of the Seven Years War in 1763, DesBarres was one of the many who made application for grants of land, according to the terms prescribed by the British Government, who wished especially to reward those who had fought in her service, as well as to encourage the development of the province. Many of the best areas thus offered had been settled by the French Acadians, but their wholesale deportation in 1755 had caused large areas of rich land to return to the Crown. DesBarres was by this time quite familiar with Nova Scotia, and during the following ten years in which he carried on his surveys he must have learned where the most desirable lands and forests were located, and he showed much wisdom in the selection of the various tracts which were acquired by him. In terms of acres his possessions were large; their value as revenue producers was small, because of the lack of population and the undeveloped condition of the country. Their value in yield of forest and farm products was not to be realized for many long years. Yet, at this time, DesBarres and many others who were greedy for land believed in an immediate rapid development of Nova Scotia and had visions of possessing great estates of which they would be the overlords, the incoming settlers leasing their farms according to the English system.

The following properties were acquired by DesBarres:

Falmouth Grant:—This, the first grant obtained by DesBarres was one of 500 acres in the Township of Falmouth, N. S.,¹ dated June 8, 1763. It was subject to a quit

¹. On this property DesBarres built a house, known as Castle Frederic, between 1763 and 1769. There his mistress, Mary Cannon, lived for many years, and brought up their children. DesBarres finally deeded the entire property to her, when he became Governor of Cape Breton in 1784, and she, later, disposed of it and moved away from Falmouth. It was held for a time by the Sangster family, who in time sold it. Over a hundred years ago, Judge DesBarres, a grandson of J. F. W. DesBarres, acquired Castle Frederic and nearly 600 acres; he tore down the house and built a new one. This property is now held by his grandson, Major W. F. D. Bremner. Near this house is the place where Coulon de Villiers crossed the Avon on his way to attack Col. Noble's force in Grand Pré, in 1747.

rent of one shilling sterling for every 50 acres, the first payment to be made ten years from the date of the grant.

On April 8, 1768, he was granted an additional 2000 acres in this township.

Cumberland Grant—On May 15th, 1765, DesBarres and six others obtained a valuable tract in Cumberland County at the head of the Bay of Fundy. The most valuable portion was at Minudie, on the coast, and the rest was at Nappan and Macean, somewhat inland. While the grant was stated to be 8000 acres it was considerably larger, and included about 3500 acres of the best marsh land. It was not long before DesBarres had secured the entire property for himself. During the Revolutionary War Minudie had been ravaged by American raiders, and in DesBarres' plea to the British Government for financial reimbursement, he refers to the losses thereby caused him.

There were a number of French Acadian squatters on this property, but many moved away when they were asked to sign long leases and pay rent; yet DesBarres invited other Acadians to settle on his property. Some years after DesBarres' death this entire property was sold by the heirs to Amos Seaman, who administered it for a number of years; after his death it was divided into lots and sold to various parties.

Tatamagouche Grant—This was a vast area of 20,000 acres at Tatamagouche¹ (near River John) on the Gulf of St. Lawrence coast; the Grant was dated August 25, 1765. According to the terms of the latter, the Crown reserved all right to gold, silver and coal. The grantee had to pay the Crown a yearly quit rent and to plant hemp in certain quantities. Moreover, the condition was inserted that "if said grantee shall not settle the said grant of land with Protestant settlers in the proportion of one person for every two hundred acres within ten years from the date herein then this grant is to revert to the Crown, and the Governor". As DesBarres was actively engaged in his

¹ DesBarres kept a diary at this period. It remained in possession of his family until 1896, when it was loaned to Dr. H. Y. Hind, who did not return it, and it has disappeared. The latter published a few extracts from it in the WINDSORIAN, Vol. 1, No. 2, one of which refers to the building of a block-house and redoubt at Tatamagouche according to plans made by DesBarres, the work being started in June, 1768.. When completed, the small fort was named Fort Franklin, in honour of Michael Franklin, Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia.

surveys, he had no time to attend to his property nor did he carry out the obligations of the grant as regards the quit rent and the raising of hemp. He succeeded, however, in inducing a number of dissatisfied Lunenburg settlers to move to Tatamagouche in 1771 or 1772. These were Protestants from Switzerland and the region of Montbeliard in France, to which, also DesBarres' family belonged. One of the young men, George Matatall, brought with him his mother, who, in DesBarres' childhood days had been his nurse. DesBarres would not at first sell his land but leased it in lots of eighty acres or less to each family. No rent was to be paid for six years; the next year there was to be a charge of five shillings a lot; the eighth year, ten shillings, and, thereafter, one pound yearly. DesBarres provided the live stock, but stipulated that one half their natural increase should be given to him. This arrangement was never satisfactory, for the tenants always resented paying rent and longed to own their own lands. DesBarres had appointed a Scotchman, Waugh, his largest tenant, as his agent, but it was not long before trouble arose between them, ending in litigation which was never satisfactorily terminated.

DesBarres was constantly in financial difficulties and his creditors frequently sent the Sheriff to seize his property, which included half the increase of the live stock on farms rented from him. The settlers resented these seizures and many moved away choosing districts where farms could be bought outright. Soon after this DesBarres began to grant freehold deeds, fearing, doubtless, that he might lose all his tenants, for they had continued to fight for this privilege from the beginning. In 1795 an examination of the estate was made showing that it was paying only sixty pounds a year and that by the removals of tenants DesBarres had lost over a thousand pounds. The proprietor was, therefore, grudgingly forced to change his policy and to sell his lands freely. Yet it was only after his death, when the property was managed by his son Augustus, that freehold deeds were granted to all who applied for them. Sales continued to be made throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century, until, finally, not an acre remained in possession of DesBarres' descendants.

New Brunswick Grant—In 1765 Joseph Goreham and others had obtained from the Governor of Nova Scotia

two grants between the Memramcook and Petitcodiac rivers (now in the Province of New Brunswick), amounting to 30,000 acres. These were bought by DesBarres in 1775. When New Brunswick was established as a separate government he failed to register in the new province. Consequently on February 11, 1805, he had to obtain confirmation of his claims, in order to retain his grants. This property was the cause of trouble and litigation down to 1841, for during his years of residence in England and Cape Breton many French Acadians had settled on these lands, and had established farms. While he was Lieut.-Governor of Prince Edward Island his agent, Polly Cannon, was employed to induce a number of these people to sign long leases, afterwards, about 1805, asking them to pay the rents which he claimed. They refused, stating that they had been in undisputed possession for twenty-four years and that, therefore, they were exempt. DesBarres became more insistent and tried by threats and severity to gain his ends. After his death in 1824 his son Augustus continued this policy, until the name of DesBarres became loathed and feared among the peaceable Acadian peasantry. Litigation then ensued and there was a succession of lawsuits, expensive lawyers being employed by both parties. On one occasion, in 1828, the parish priest of Memramcook decided to call a meeting of his people to discuss the land troubles. It was announced for a Sunday following Mass. The authorities hearing of the gathering became alarmed and sent constables to disperse the people, arrest their leaders, and take them to gaol. In 1840 it was decided to bring action against many owners of farms. The latter employed the best lawyers and prepared to fight. In 1841 a test case was brought before the Court in the county town of Dorchester. The decision was given in favor of the Acadians. It was appealed to the Supreme Court of the Province, which decided that all cleared lands and the marshes belonged to the Acadians, and the woodlands to DesBarres. This was not very satisfactory to either party and the lawyers, afterwards, agreed on a plan whereby the difficulties were settled by the farmers paying two dollars an acre for the woodlands or one dollar an acre for both cleared land (including marsh) and woodland. The French held a meeting to consider the decision and their lawyer, Mr. Young of Halifax (later Chief Justice of N. S.) advised them to pay \$1.00 an

acre. This was done and litigation ceased. Many of the people were forced to raise money by mortgaging their farms, and were thereby handicapped for years.

It is interesting to note that during the many years in which DesBarres lived out of Nova Scotia, his land interests were in the competent hands of a woman, who held the closest of all human relationships to him. Her name was Mary Cannon, known among her intimates as "Polly". As there has been considerable speculation regarding this woman I shall give her own account of herself, as it is found in record of Chancery proceedings in the case of DesBarres vs. Waugh et al. in 1810. Mary Cannon gave evidence at Windsor on March 19 (This document is now in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia):—

"And first the said defendant Mary Cannon for herself in answer states that in the year 1764 she became acquainted with the complainant who paid her great attention and did by great persuasion induce this defendant to live with him and undertake the management of his domestic concerns. That the defendant lived with the said complainant from the year 1764 until his departure from this province for England in the year 1773, and had during the whole of the time aforesaid the sole and entire management of his affairs in this province and during that time became the mother of six children by complainant, five daughters and one son, and this defendant further states that during the whole of the time she so as aforesaid lived with complainant he treated her in every respect as his wife with great affection and tenderness and always placed the most unbounded confidence in the defendant and left all his concerns in the province entirely to her management at all times, assuring defendant that all the property which he possessed in Nova Scotia should ultimately become the property of the defendant and her children."

She also stated that on DesBarres' return from England he was well pleased and fully satisfied with what she had done. One, Samuel Sparrow, had brought a suit against DesBarres for £4000, in the latter's absence, and a writ was levied on the estates. This was defended by her at great cost.

The case, which called for this evidence did not come to trial. The evidence serves to establish the correct facts regarding DesBarres and Mary Cannon. She lived many years at Castle Frederick, DesBarres' home in Windsor, but, later, she was for a time on his property in Minudie.

There is no record to show that Mary lived with

DesBarres when he was Governor of Cape Breton and, later, of Prince Edward Island, but we know that some of the children lived with him in both places. Nothing is known as to their relations during the last years of DesBarres' life, when he lived in Halifax, nor do we know when Mary died. That DesBarres had a legal wife and legitimate children is evident from his Will, which is on record in Halifax. The wife's name was Martha, and property was left to her. I have not been able to find her full name, nor when she was married. She was buried alongside her husband under St. George's Church in Halifax.

LAST YEARS

DesBarres' last years were spent comparatively peacefully in Halifax, his chief troubles arising from his land difficulties. He was socially inclined, and delighted to act as host to his friends. He founded the Rockingham Club, and was selected to lay out the grounds of Prince's Lodge, which was used by the Duke of Kent. He took an active part in building St. George's Church. Indeed, it is said that he carried his way as regards the plan of the church over the heads of the great majority of the members. He was vigorous up to the end of his life, and is said to have celebrated his hundredth birthday by dancing for his friends on a table. When he died he was within a month of being 103. The following is an account of his funeral taken from the Halifax "Acadian Recorder" of November 6th, 1834:—

FUNERAL OF THE LATE COL. DESBARRES

"On Monday last, about three o'clock, p. m., the funeral procession left his residence. His Honour, the President, most of the members of His Majesty's Council, the gentlemen of the Bar, the officers of the Army and Navy, and many other respectable inhabitants attended as mourners by invitation.

The procession was escorted by a detachment of military and the rear was closed by a number of carriages. On arriving at St. George's Church, the funeral service was

impressively read by the Rev. Dr. Twining, at the conclusion of which three volleys were discharged by the troops. Although the day was very rainy, we have seldom seen a greater attendance or more interest excited on such an occasion. Indeed, every reflecting person must have found great cause for meditation in the departure of this venerable man from our fleeting and unsubstantial scene. We saw him on the day before the interment, lying in state. His face was exposed to view, and it exhibited unequivocal marks of a mind originally cast in a strong and inflexible mould, while the hand of time appeared to have made but slight impression on the features. The chart which he prepared from his own survey of this Province will give his memory claims upon the gratitude of the nautical world, and could only have been produced by a man of surprising perseverance. We believe he was a native of Switzerland, and are informed that he held a Captain's Commission under the great Wolfe at the reduction of Quebec."

Some years ago the Nova Scotia Historical Society placed a bronze tablet in his honour in St. George's Church, and, recently, the Historical Sites and Monuments Board of Canada erected a memorial in Sydney, Cape Breton, which was founded by DesBarres in 1785.

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